the Messenger
North West Law
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Management really does matter

Chris Bull Executive Director of Kingsmead Square reports on Manchester Law Society's Management Conference...

As we gathered at the Hilton Deansgate for the 2015 Manchester Law Society Management Conference, it seemed only fair to expect it to be by far the most exciting and interesting event in the city that day. Clearly, the media, police, politicians and protestors had other ideas and the Conservative Party Conference took all the front pages and blocked all the roads in Manchester that day.

Yet, by the end of the day, I think the attendees were pretty convinced that we had, in fact, triumphed in the interesting and exciting stakes. Across the day we were treated to a roster of legal business leaders, experts and advisors who collectively underlined why, as I said when introducing the day, the North West is so clearly the innovation hub of the UK legal sector.

A number of repeated themes and strands emerged throughout the day and this short piece can only summarise some of those very quickly, but here goes:

• *"Standing still is the fastest way of moving backwards in a rapidly changing world"* – Rob Elvin, Manchester Managing Partner at Squire Patton Boggs introduced the first session of the day with this Lauren Bacall quote and it was picked up by multiple speakers during the day. The incredible pace of economic, social and technological change was a central theme and the specific challenges facing law firms within this creates a situation where if firms are not accelerating their development and change they are going backwards. Change certainly featured prominently as Simon took us through his journey from joining the still new Manchester office of Hammond Suddards in 1997 to today

Conference Chair Chris Bull

continued on page 11

The Magna Carta Legal Walk 2015

On Thursday 1 October around 400 lawyers, advisors and other legal professionals joined forces for a sponsored walk around the city sights of Manchester to raise over £7,000 to support free legal advice across the region. The route had a Magna Carta theme to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the sealing of the Magna Carta and highlight the document's importance and relevance to access to justice today.

The Legal Profession came together with participants from the Judiciary, Law Firms, Barristers' Chambers, CILEx and law students, a total of 36 teams took part in the 10km charity walk. Lead walkers included the Vice President of Manchester Law Society, Michael Hardacre, Chair of Manchester Young Solicitors Group, Charlotte Brinsley and NWLST President, HHJ Graham Platts.

The funds raised by the NWLST are essential for community legal advice services, as they help the most vulnerable individuals in our society. Each year the NWLST supports campaigns that help over 2 million families and young people receive protection, shelter and education. For over 60 years legal advice services have been helping local people to help themselves.

HHJ Graham Platts, President of the North West Legal Trust (NWLST) spoke at the end of the walk he was delighted that so much had been raised from the Walk which would help support the most disadvantaged members of society and spoke of the need to continuing supporting the Trusts fundraising efforts as it is more important now than ever to do so to help the provision of free legal advice across the region.
Many advice agencies such as 'The East Manchester Legal Advice Centre' (EMLAC) and 'The Personal Support Unit' (PSU) are run on tight budgets, and are limited in resources necessary to raise money to continue providing free legal advice. The Trust is entirely self funding and carries out fund raising activities to support these campaigns, so that they may concentrate on the issues faced by the community and is capable of providing advice and widening access to justice.

"The charities supported by the NWLST help facilitate access to justice for the poorest and most disadvantaged members of society

providing free legal help to people facing problems such as homelessness, debt, employment, family issues, discrimination and injustice."

The Manchester Legal Walk has provided essential support and funding for legal advice services in the North West region, and has helped make a considerable impact on the lives of the most vulnerable in society. Legal aid cuts and wider funding cuts have adversely affected legal advice centres and the community. The changes to civil costs and legal aid drives more people to law centres, while funding shortages mean their work is increasingly restricted. The money raised from the walk and other NWLST fundraising activities has enabled advice services to further their resources and provide enhanced assistance to clients. This has directly increased the prospects for many people seeking legal support and has made a real difference to those most in need of justice.

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From the President

Louise Straw

What a FARCE! If you have been asked to write some sort of satirical sketch you would not have been able to come up with such a script as the debacle which has been the government/LAA's handling of the award of the two tier contracts in crime. Initially we were told the week of the 22nd September; then without any explanation it moved to the 28th September. This coincided with me attending the opening of the Legal Year at Westminster Abbey where at I was able to speak with Matthew Coates, the Director General of the Legal Aid Agency. I asked about the delay and whether or not we would be told that week – to which his response was "soon, soon". Clearly "soon" to him was akin to the "cheque is in the post" as nothing happened on the 28th and we were informed that it was to be the 15th October. No explanation and no apology. How are we expected to run a business? At Burton Copeland we are preparing for a Lexcel review; part of that review involves our Business Plan. How are we to prepare a business plan – perhaps we should just write "soon" on every page!

The night before we learned that a whistle blower has gone to the press to reveal the process behind the assessment of our applications. The tender document took hours of painstaking work to complete with numerous revisions and reviews. Twenty four hours before the announcement we discover they are being "marked" by individuals with no legal experience, from an agency being paid the minimum wage (more than we get at the police station!) who have been told their money will be docked if they don't complete sufficient questions per day.

Well the 15th October came around – there will be many who were in the same shoes as I and my partners. I certainly didn't get a great deal of sleep, worrying about the options of both getting a contract and not getting a contract. Then we had the stress of the wait on the day. We were not told when we would be notified just that we had to keep an eye out for the email through the portal. There was not a great deal of work done whilst we all waited. It was about 4pm when we finally discovered our position but I was with a solicitor from Monmouthshire who received his notification at 9.45pm – YES 9.45pm.

I am guessing that a number of bottles of wine were opened that night! I am sure that the stress and strain of this process is far from over and that more sleepless nights may be around the corner. May be the time has come for me to set up my own "Happy Hen hotel" and give up on the law!

Turning to matters a little more pleasant. I was delighted to attend the opening of the legal year in London. It is probably a once in a life time chance to be present in Westminster Abbey and to see and indeed be part of the procession and ceremony. Manchester and indeed the North West were very well represented. Our own Presiding Judge, HHJ Stockdale together with HHJ Goldstone (The recorder of Liverpool) were both present. Mr O'Byrne the Leader of the Northern Circuit represented the Bar and two new Manchester Silks, Lisa Roberts and Louise Blackwell were also present in the procession – two ladies who clearly prove Lord Sumptions wrong in his assumption that women are unwilling to face long hours and tough working conditions. Both ladies are very highly respected on the Northern Circuit and quite rightly so! Whilst we have many problems within our judicial system to the outside world we are still considered as the gold standard and I was delighted to meet lawyers from America, Canada and Slovenia amongst others.

I was also delighted to represent Manchester Law Society at the service at Manchester Cathedral to celebrate the opening of the legal year in the north. Perhaps not quite on the scale of Westminster Abbey but for a few minutes I felt very important as I led the procession into the Cathedral. Behind the scenes one of our learned Judges did his impression of "Deputy Dog" in his long bottomed wig – I won't tell which one! Fran has also got me back on the road visiting our Advantage partners and this month saw me on the road (feel like Bill Bryson) to Lancaster University to meet with Xyone who protect us from Cyber crime. I had not appreciated their close link to the University and the excellent work they are undertaking in conjunction with students there. Thank you to Stephen and his team for the warm welcome, the excellent presentation and lovely lunch.

In the run up to Christmas the dinner season has started and may I thank Bristol Law Society for their warm welcome to their annual dinner and awards night this month. Michael Gupwall, The President, presided over a lovely evening and as in Manchester it was wonderful to see the best of Bristol recognised for their achievements. Which reminds me – get your nominations in for the Manchester Awards, if you don't enter you can't win!

I can't believe that my year is nearly over. David Joseph warned me that it would fly by (but who takes any notice of him!). Only one more column to write and then you won't have to hear about the Straw family pets any longer. On that front not a lot to report other than Poppy got locked in whilst I was away so social services have been called and she is on the vulnerable cat register – personally I think she slept the whole time and didn't even notice I had gone! Until next month keep dancing – oh sorry its not strictly is it!!!!!!!

Louise Straw
President

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News from Bridge Street

Invitation to Newly Qualified Solicitor Civic Ceremony at Manchester Town Hall

Congratulations on qualifying as a solicitor and welcome to the profession.

Manchester Law Society extend an inviation to all Newly Qualified Solicitors to mark this milestone in your legal career by attending a Civic ceremony at Manchester Town Hall at 3pm Monday 16th November 2015 where the Lord Mayor and the President of Manchester Law Society would both like to congratulate you and present you with a certificate to welcome you to the profession in Manchester.

THE LORD MAYOR
CITY OF MANCHESTER

Your certificate will be presented by the Lord Mayor of Manchester and President of Manchester Law Society and the ceremony will be followed by a reception with prosecco and canapes.

Order of Events
15:00 – tea and coffee upon arrival
15:30 – Ceremony begins
16:15 – Canapés served with Prosecco and opportunity for photographs

The ceremony is a unique opportunity to celebrate your success as well as acknowledge the friends and family who have supported you on the way. The ceremony commences at 3pm in the Great Hall and will be followed by a drinks reception where there will be a complimentary glass or two of Prosecco or orange juice.

Each newly qualified solicitor will be able to bring at least 2 guests with the option of further guests should numbers permit. Tickets cost £20 per person for NQ's and guests alike. Please note that places are booked on a first come, first served basis.

The dress code for the NQ's will be business attire (no expensive gown hire necessary!) and a high quality photography service will be available for all new members attending the ceremony. You can choose to have a professional portrait, a photo as you are presented on the stage during the ceremony and a photo with your family or friends.

I look forward to meeting you

Fran Eccles-Bech
Chief Executive

To book your tickets please email FranEccles-Bech@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk

Forthcoming Events

Cyber Security & Risk in the Information Age

Thursday, 5th November 2015

This conference covers the full spectrum of topics facing all professional sectors and will be of interest not just to lawyers. All aspects of computer crime will be covered, including intrusion investigations, cybercrime law, digital forensics, information assurance, along with research and development, and testing of digital forensic tools.

An essential event for Senior Partners, Managing Partners, COLPs, COFAs, IT Directors and Practice Managers

Venue: Hilton Hotel, Deansgate, Manchester
Cost to attend: MLS Members £110.00 + VAT (£132.00) Non-members £150.00 + VAT (£180.00)
Registration: 09:00
Sessions start: 09:30
Conference closes: 17:00

Crime Update and Q&A with His Honour Judge Potter

Wednesday, 11th November 2015

Don't miss this chance to hear His Honour Judge John Potter speak on pertinent crime issues.

The seminar will be exploring Better Case Management, evidence in trials alleging sexual offences, sentencing dangerous offenders and other current topics.
His Honour Judge John Potter is Resident Judge, Minshull St CC Manchester

Venue: Exchange Chambers, 5th Floor, 201 Deansgate, Manchester
Cost to attend: Members of MLS £20.00 + VAT (£24.00) Non Members £40.00 + VAT (£48.00)
Registration: 17:00
Sessions start: 17:30
Q&A: 19:00
Nibbles & Networking: 19:30 – 20:00

PA and Secretarial Conference

Wednesday 18th November 2015

This popular conference offers PAs, EAs, Secretaries, Office Managers, Administrators and support staff a chance to build on their skills.

Practical and interactive sessions will explore how to manage difficult and demanding clients and colleagues as well as looking at the benefits of networking and how to do it well. Speakers will also look at how to improve and maintain your and your team's wellbeing in the office.

Venue: Hilton Hotel, Deansgate, Manchester
Cost to attend: £55.00 + VAT (£66.00)
Registration: 12:30
Sessions start: 13:00
Conference closes: 16:40

For further information or to make a booking please contact:
Email: CarlaJones@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk or VictoriaRidge@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk

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Regulatory Affairs Committee Update

Did you know that November means "ninth month" and yet it is the eleventh month in the modern calendar. Confused? It was also known as the "blood month" when animals were sacrificed and slaughtered for preservation through the winter.

Back in the regulatory world, the Legal Ombudsman's decisions recently have been as confusing as the definition of November and whilst there has been very little blood spilt this month, the SDT has been enjoying slinging quite a bit of mud and criticism at the SRA for their handling of some disciplinary matters
.

The Legal Ombudsman

I reported in last month's column of the confusion which arose over the new European directive on alternative dispute resolution (ADR) and the chair of the legal services consumer panel Elisabeth Davies has now also predicted that this confusion is set to continue. She is of course looking at it from the consumers perspective and feels that because law firms will have to signpost to an additional Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)-certified ADR provider even though the ADR Directive is voluntary for businesses and so may not even use the service, the legal sector will now not have just one body to signpost to, which risks confusion for clients and lawyers alike.

What is certain is that you should have revised your complaints signposting wording by now to comply with the EU Directive.

The LeO has also announced that it is recruiting more Ombudsmen to triage complaints at the outset. Currently the Ombudsman only sees a case at the end after an investigator has looked into the case and where the case cannot be resolved informally. According to figures, 38% of complaints now go to a final Ombudsman decision which is higher than the LeO wanted or anticipated so clearly there is a feeling that the investigators are not managing to achieve an early resolution as often as the LeO would like.

Under the new regime, Ombudsmen will screen complaints at the front end of the process with the intention that there is a clear steer from an ombudsman rather than an investigator as to whether a resolution is capable of being achieved. It is hoped that this will improve the quality of the decision making rather than the emphasis being upon speed of response.

In theory it could be a good thing but only time will tell as to whether the quality/consistency of decision making will improve. An Ombudsman reviewing the case at the outset might I am sure set out with the intention of achieving an early resolution in the same way as a LeO caseworker would do but that does not mean that complainants will not want to get a formal decision after all the facts have been considered. Speed of response is also still important and it is ironic that the LeO is not achieving its targets set by the LSB in relation to timeliness, when delay is one of the main complaints directed at lawyers!

SRA – A Question of Trust

The SRA has launched its 'A question of trust' national campaign to give everyone a chance to have their say about action taken against those solicitors who fall short of the expected standards. It will run until the end of January 2016 and if you haven't looked at the survey already, it is well worth a quick look. Those taking part are given short scenarios and asked to vote on how seriously they view the different situations where solicitors have failed to uphold professional standards at work or in their private lives. It covers scenarios such as conflicts, lying on a CV about expertise, drink and drug abuse, mis-use of client money, and false or over-charging and is certainly thought provoking. Solicitors as well as the public can take part in it and it only takes a few minutes to complete. There is a formal consultation on it aswell so any comments you may have, please feed back to me. All feedback will apparently help the SRA build a reference framework, which will support decision making and transparency. That can only be a good thing (if it works!) given the current lack of consistency and transparency in the way the SRA deals with disciplinary matters.

Which brings me nicely on to the SDT and criticism which it seems to be taking some pleasure in dishing out to the SRA in recent months! The most recent one criticised the SRA for its drafting of a statement of facts and suggested outcome which according to the Tribunal was "insufficient to allow any tribunal to conclude that the sanction proposed was the correct one". This led to the solicitor involved being fined a higher amount by the Tribunal than had been agreed with the SRA which was certainly unfortunate for the solicitor involved.
Another recent case involving allegations of forgery against a non-admitted fee earner was thrown out because the SRA had insufficient evidence to substantiate the very serious allegations. In a rare finding, the SRA was ordered to pay costs too with the SDT issuing a warning to the SRA that it should reappraise cases in light of the respondent's evidence and monitor cases generally. Unfortunately, the process for referral to SDT is frighteningly opaque and the Compli team see more and more instances of practitioners receiving a one-line letter advising them that they will be heading to Ludgate Circus (home of the SDT) at some point in the future. There is no right of appeal against a referral to the SDT and the number of cases where the SRA has decided to rescind its decision to make the referral is very rare indeed. It also seems from the SDTs comments that when deciding whether or not to certify that there is a case to answer, the SDT panel has sight of the SRA's statement of allegations, but not the response. The task of reappraising the decision following receipt of the respondent's evidence therefore falls to the SRA. Surely, the regulator is conflicted here because not only is it unlikely to change its mind all of a sudden, it has often incurred – during the course of its investigation - significant costs which it is unlikely to recover without an order from the SDT.

An objective assessment, or at the very least an assessment of the position once the respondent has submitted their evidence, would plainly be a fairer system. Lets hope we see some improvement going forward.
Finally, the next COLP and COFA forum in Manchester will be on 26 November between 8.30 and 10am at Weightmans LLP offices, 3 Piccadilly Place, Manchester.

Michelle Garlick
Chair Manchester Law Society Regulatory Affairs Committee
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Hill Dickinson strengthens Property offering with appointment of Planning Law team

International law firm Hill Dickinson is continuing its recruitment drive with the appointment of a specialist planning team.

Lynette Day and Grant Anderson

Grant Anderson, formerly of Addleshaw Goddard, is heading up the new planning team in Manchester and brings with him associate, Lynette Day. A senior planning and environmental lawyer, Grant has advised developers, landowners and public sector clients on a range of planning projects in areas including retail, housing, infrastructure and regeneration.

The announcement follows on from Hill Dickinson's recent appointment of commercial property partner, Jim Purves, formerly of Pinsent Masons and the relocation of property partner Alastair Reid to the Manchester office from the firm's Sheffield base. The property team in Manchester now stands at 22 strong.

The investment in the new planning team is the latest move from Hill Dickinson to build on its ambitious growth plans across its Business Services Group which continues to perform strongly.

Commenting on Grant's arrival, Hill Dickinson's Head of Business Services, David Chinn, said: "We have been biding our time to find an impressive planning lawyer for our team here in Manchester, someone with great contacts and track record, and we believe that we have found the right candidate in Grant.

"Grant is well-known and extremely well respected in his field, previously working as head of a retail planning group, advising clients such as Sainburys. He will be an invaluable asset to Hill Dickinson."

Grant added: "My decision to move to Hill Dickinson was based on the firm's reputation and its significant growth plans for the property team, which is evident in the number of lateral hires over the last 12 months. The firm has a strong sector-led approach, something that I am keen to further develop building upon my own experience in key sectors."

gunnercooke appoints CEO

gunnercooke, the UK's leading challenger law firm, has appointed Anna Beaumont as CEO, to accelerate the next phase of the firm's rapid growth.

Anna Beaumont

Anna was gunnercooke's first ever partner appointment, joining the firm in 2011. She is known for her work as a corporate lawyer, advising on both M&A and private equity transactions, in addition to gaining extensive in-house experience at £1.2billion turnover Enterprise plc (now Amey), where she advised on the groups acquisitions and disposals for a number of years.

Anna's depth of experience has been invaluable to the growth of gunnercooke, where she successfully brought a number of large plc and private equity clients to the firm. In her new role as CEO, Anna will use her experience to continue to develop gunnercooke's culture and central structure, across both London and Manchester offices.

Commenting on her appointment, Darryl Cooke, founding partner at gunnercooke, said: "Anna is one of the most gifted corporate lawyers I have ever worked with and we were incredibly lucky to recruit her at an early stage of gunnercooke's growth. Since then, Anna's contribution has been a huge asset, and we are delighted to appoint her to the board as CEO. For both Anna and for the business this is a much needed step forward, and we're very excited about what we can achieve together."

Anna said: "Since joining gunnercooke in 2011, we've been evolving at a rapid rate, and so too has our support structure. Now, at almost 100 partners, it's crucial that we elevate a gear, so that we continue to deliver a better working environment for our lawyers, and service to our clients. I'm very proud of what we've achieved in 5 years since inception, and there's a definite momentum behind the next phase of our growth. The next 12 months will be really very exciting.'

Alongside Anna, Marketing Director Laura Jordan has also been appointed to the board. Laura has been with gunnercooke for 3 years and has been instrumental in building the firm's profile.

John McDermott joins Laytons

John McDermott has joined the corporate and commercial team at Manchester law firm Laytons.

John graduated from the University of Liverpool in 2006 and qualified as a solicitor with a top 45 law firm, where he spent 8 years. John qualified as an employment lawyer before crossing over to corporate law in 2014.

John has a range of experience in acting for a diverse client base which includes start-ups and SMEs, social housing providers, shipping companies, accountancy and law firms, and internationally trading manufacturing companies. John's key areas of practise are mergers and acquisitions, company appointments, restructuring and start-up investments.

Partner Barney Leaf commented "Laytons is delighted to be able to welcome John to our growing corporate and commercial practise and help us to develop our offering."

Curious sponsorship for Mills & Reeve

The Manchester office of law firm Mills & Reeve is sponsoring the inaugural Manchester Curious festival of architecture which is designed to celebrate the city's secret spaces and make architecture accessible to all.

Manchester Curious, which has drawn inspiration from London Open House and Heritage Open Days, is a not-for-profit event that will form part of the 150th anniversary of Manchester Architects.

Kicking off with a launch party on October 1 at the Old Granada Studios, the festival of architecture will feature a series of guided tours and walks around sites including Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester Metropolitan University and Ancoats. Manchester Curious will run until October 4.

Catherine Kay, head of the construction team at the Manchester office of Mills & Reeve, said: "We are delighted to sponsor the inaugural Manchester Curious festival of architecture. The city boasts some of the best architecture in the UK and it is only fitting that the talents and skills of our architects, who have created some fabulous and iconic buildings, should be celebrated."

Lisa Raynes, founder of Manchester Architects and director of Raynes Architecture, said: "Architecture is an art form you engage with on a daily basis but we don't always give it the attention it deserves. There is also a perception that architecture is for 'them' as opposed to 'for everyone' and this festival hopes to democratise this art form and break down barriers between the professional and wider audience."

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Four New Trainees for Farleys

North West law firm Farleys Solicitors LLP have welcomed four new trainee solicitors to the firm in the latest stage of their growth plans. The new appointments will join departments across both the firm's private and commercial areas of practice, in response to an increase in demand, in particular from their Manchester base.

Lauren Birchall, Natalie Fitzmaurice, Rebecca Woollam and Jenny Goodwin all join the firm to complete its highly praised two year training programme, thereafter qualifying as solicitors. Lauren Birchall will be joining the award winning family law team. The department has enjoyed considerable expansion appointing a new partner and solicitor over the previous months continuing to build upon their presence in Manchester. The firm's commercial department will welcome Natalie Fitzmaurice as she joins the commercial team working closely with the city centre branch.

Jenny Goodwin will take up a position at the firm's Civil Litigation department handling complex and high value claims both regionally and nationally. The litigation team will also gain the expertise of Rebecca Woollam who joins current trainee Laura Murphy in Farleys' home grown talent scheme - a programme that encourages and supports the progression of employees within the firm.

Training Partner, Nick Molyneux, commented: "We are pleased to welcome the new trainees to the firm. The legal sector is a highly competitive industry and we are always on the lookout for new talent that will be able to assist with our continued growth.

"On behalf of the firm we wish them all the best in their placements and in their future success here at Farleys Solicitors."

Lauren Birchall, Natalie Fitzmaurice, Rebecca Woollam and Jenny Goodwin

Bromleys strengthens Commercial Property arm

Law firm Bromleys has boosted its commercial property arm with the appointment of assistant solicitor Joseph Seyed Hossein.

Joseph has joined Bromleys from Maya Solicitors in Oldham, where he managed the firm's property department.

He began his legal career at Cobbetts in Manchester and has since worked at firms including Keoghs and Asons Solicitors in Bolton.

Joseph is the latest arrival at Bromleys, following the appointments earlier this year of family law specialists Samantha Clifford and Judy Bell, and Rachael Barrett and Kate Fletcher to its Court of Protection and wills, probate and trusts teams respectively.

He joins Bromleys' corporate and commercial team, which is led by partner Paul Westwell.

Paul said: "Joseph has wide-ranging knowledge and experience of commercial and residential property matters and has a strong track record of providing a highly-professional service to clients.

"He is an excellent addition to our team at a time when we are seeing increased demand for our services, especially in the nursing home and day nursery sectors.

"His appointment will greatly assist us in serving the needs of our growing client base."

Joseph Seyed Hossein

Corporate appointment bolsters Commercial Team at Pearson

North West law firm Pearson Solicitors and Financial Advisers has added to its commercial offering with the appointment of Keith Kennedy, who heads up the Corporate Commercial team.

Keith Kennedy

Keith joins Pearson from Manchester firm Berg and has over 14 years' experience as a corporate and commercial lawyer. He has a strong reputation within the North West business community and particular experience in the telecoms, software, manufacturing and retail sectors. Over the years he has acted on numerous business sales and acquisitions, and is recommended in the current edition of the Legal 500 (Corporate and Commercial: Manchester), in which he is described as "dogged and determined".

He is committed to developing the corporate offering at Pearson and looking forward to expanding the team, by working with the many national businesses which Pearson represent.
Commenting on his new role Keith said: "I am delighted to have joined Pearson. The firm has a great client base and offers a full range of high quality legal services to the North West business community and beyond, combining traditional values with a modern approach. Pearson's ability to provide bespoke financial services, in addition to those legal services, gives it an edge over many of its competitors.

"I am looking forward to working in particular with entrepreneurs, acquisitive companies and exiting shareholders. Across the firm we will continue to challenge the view held in some quarters that it is necessary to go to a city centre firm for high quality legal and financial advice."
As well as advising on corporate transactions and general corporate and commercial agreements, he will work closely with the firm's Commercial Litigation department on shareholder disputes and the Commercial Property team on the funding aspects of property deals. Exiting shareholders and investors will be able to take expert advice from the firm's team of IFAs.

Commenting on his appointment, Commercial Partner Michael Pitt, said: "This is an exciting time for our commercial team as we continue to grow and assert ourselves as major players in the North West legal commercial landscape. Keith brings with him a wealth of experience, reputation, good humour and excellent client rapport and I am pleased to welcome him to the team - our presence is bolstered by his appointment and we are all looking forward to working alongside him."

A big STEP for Hugh Jones Solicitors

Manchester solicitors Hugh Jones has won a prestigious national award for its work with some of the most vulnerable people in society.

The court of protection specialist picked up the vulnerable client adviser of the year accolade at the tenth annual STEP Private Client Awards.

Hugh Jones Solicitors beat off tough competition from Genders & Partners, Martin Terrell of Thomson Snell & Passmore, Richard Williams of Roma Mitchell Chambers and Withers Elder law team to the win the award.

The judges said: "Hugh Jones Solicitors stood out first and foremost for their passion for their work and concern for clients. Their approach to building trust and respect showed genuine commitment and client focus, going above and beyond the call of duty to take care of their clients.'

Hugh Jones Solicitors, which was set up in 2013, is the UK's leading independent court of protection specialist. Founder Hugh Jones said: "It is a great honour to win the award particularly against such strong competition.We have been supporting vulnerable people, particularly those with a mental incapacity, their families and their advisers for many years and pride ourselves on always putting the needs of our clients first."

The awards, which took place in London and were hosted by TV news anchor and journalist Huw Edwards were attended 700 private client professionals.

STEP is the worldwide professional association for those advising families across generations. The awards are the most prestigious in the private client calendar.

The deadline for the December edition of The Messenger is 12th November 2015

Rowlinsons crowned Best Conveyancer in the North West

Rowlinsons Solicitors enhanced their increasing reputation by picking up three accolades at the recent LFS Gala Dinner and Conveyancing Awards earlier this month which were held at Stadium MK in Milton Keynes.

The Frodsham based law firm received the prestigious accolade of Best Conveyancer in the North West and as a result they subsequently advanced to compete for the title of Overall Conveyancing Firm of the Year alongside the other regional winners.

In the final Rowlinsons were voted as being the third best conveyancing firm in the country and received the bronze award.

The firm was also highly commended in the Direct Conveyancer of the Year category.

Tom Parkinson, Director and Head of Property at Rowlinsons commented 'We are extremely honored to have been recognised three times at these awards for our conveyancing services. As Head of the Property team I am particularly proud of the entire team's achievement which is thoroughly deserved and reflects the commitment, hard work and effort which they have demonstrated over the course of the last year."

Andrew Graves, Tom Parkinson & Denis Stevenson.

"Winning the LFS awards means a great deal to us here at Rowlinsons. We may not be a city based practice but that hasn't stopped us from striving to deliver the highest standards in property law services to our clients. It's an ethos that runs throughout Rowlinsons and is not confined to our property team. Every one of our employees has contributed to this award and we are very proud of their hard work and dedication."

Weightmans Managing and Senior Partner re-elected for second term

The Partners of top 45 national law firm Weightmans have re-elected John Schorah and Dan Cutts as Managing Partner and Senior Partner respectively.

They have been elected unopposed for a second 3 year term commencing on the 1st May 2016.

Dan Cutts, who has worked at Weightmans for 15 years, commented on the firm's ethos:"John and I both share a real passion for Weightmans, our people and most importantly our clients. We will both continue to manage and motivate our teams in our 11 offices across the country, so that we can strengthen our business and continue to exceed client expectations."

John Schorah who joined the firm in 2002 added: "Dan and I are proud to be re-elected. For us, the Weightmans way is about our people delivering expert knowledge, outstanding client service and quality advice, consistently. As a firm, we have hired key people, expanded in the areas our clients have asked us to, and are being rewarded by excellent rankings, awards and client feedback. We look to build on our success and keep moving forward. Exciting times ahead."

Weightmans recently merged with Leeds firm Ford & Warren, and recently reported record rankings in Legal 500 2015. The firm also took home the Excellence in Training / Talent Management in this weeks The Lawyer Business Leadership Awards.

Dan Cutts and John Schorah

Davis Blank Furniss Looks To Grow Entertainment, Sports & Media Work With Rudi Kidd Appointment

Davis Blank Furniss – the Manchester & Glossop based law firm – has appointed Rudi Kidd as a consultant solicitor specialising in Entertainment, Media, Sports and Intellectual Property law. His new role will see him grow the firm's work within the music, film, television, sports, fashion and IT industries on both contentions and non-contentions matters.

Prior to joining Davis Blank Furniss, Rudi worked at IPS Law LLP where he represented Premier League and Championship football clubs and sports agents. His work included negotiating players' image rights and representation agreements. He also advised Ryder Cup players, acted on football club acquisitions and advised on defamation & injunction applications.

Rudi qualified in 1994 and started his career at Daniels Solicitors in Macclesfield. In 1995 he moved to London and joined Searles Solicitors where he worked with high profile clients such as Seal, Moby, Portishead, Ash and Jamiroquai.

He returned to Manchester a year later and set up his own firm – Gray & Co – which boasted an enviable client list of household names including; Atomic Kitten, Lemn Sissay, Rae & Christian, Grand Central Records, Grand Central Music Publishing, Factory Records, 20/20 Vision Records and Fat City Records.

Rudi was a non-executive director/ contributor of "In the City" - the annual music conference in Manchester which was founded by the late Tony Wilson and his partner Yvette Livesey. He was also a managing director of Grand Central Music Publishing Limited from 1998 to 2013.

Gray & Co closed down in 2011 and Rudi then joined Kuit, Steinart Levy LLP where he worked as a consultant solicitor for two and a half years.

He is a member of The Entertainment and Sports Lawyers Association, the USA-based lawyers group.

Rudi said of his appointment: "I'm really excited to be joining Davis Blank Furniss. It's a well-established firm with a very good reputation. There's a real drive to expand both the services it offers and the kinds of clients it works with. This was a big draw for me and really fits with my own ambitions. He added: I'm now looking forward to growing the firm's presence in my specialist areas as well as adding value to our existing client base."

Rudi Kidd

Kate Oldfield – managing partner – added: "We've been thinking about ramping up or presence in the Entertainment, Media and Sports sectors for a while but we wanted to make sure we had the right talent in place. Rudi's appointment is the first step in that process and we are all delighted that he is now part of the Davis Blank Furniss team."

HRC Law LLP promotes Sherrelle Scott to its corporate and commercial team and welcomes new trainee

HRC Law LLP are delighted to announce the appointment of Sherrelle Scott as a solicitor in the firm's expanding corporate and commercial department. Sherrelle, who was HRC Law's first ever trainee, completed her training contract at the beginning of September.

Mark Traynor, a partner at HRC Law said: "Congratulations to Sherrelle. Her expertise and work ethic mean she will be a great addition to a busy department which is going from strength to strength."

Jennifer has joined HRC Law as a trainee solicitor from a National Firm where she had been working as a paralegal. She will be working alongside the partners of the firm and gaining experience in all departments.

Training principle Richard Whalley said: "Jennifer stood out among the very high calibre of applicants for the position due to her previous legal work experience and her commitment to a career as a commercial lawyer. We are committed to training and development, and our ongoing policy of trainee recruitment in the current climate is testament to this."

Sherrelle Scott

Ralli and inCase join forces to develop app

Long-standing north-west firm, Ralli Solicitors have chosen inCase to help them develop their own mobile app for their personal injury clients.

The firm has embarked on a number of long term projects to systemise and improve efficiency within the personal injury practice in the wake of the reforms. Having recently implemented a new case management system, it was time to turn attention to enhancing communications between the firm and its clients. Amongst the number of benefits, with inCase integrating directly into their IT systems, it was the clear leader in its field.

Martin Coyne, Managing Director said, "inCase provides a one stop App for our clients, which contains all of their case data. They will have to do no more searching emails for documents - it's all there inside the App, which is more efficient for them, and more economic for Ralli. Just perfect and easy!"

Sucheet Amin, Managing Director and founder of inCase said, "Martin is a seasoned and well-respected solicitor and businessman. As someone who has 'seen it all' I'm delighted that he and his team have chosen us as his partners in developing their own app. Our ability to use the technology and experiences that we have built up over the last 3 years puts us in a position to meet Ralli's expectations which include brand management and client service."

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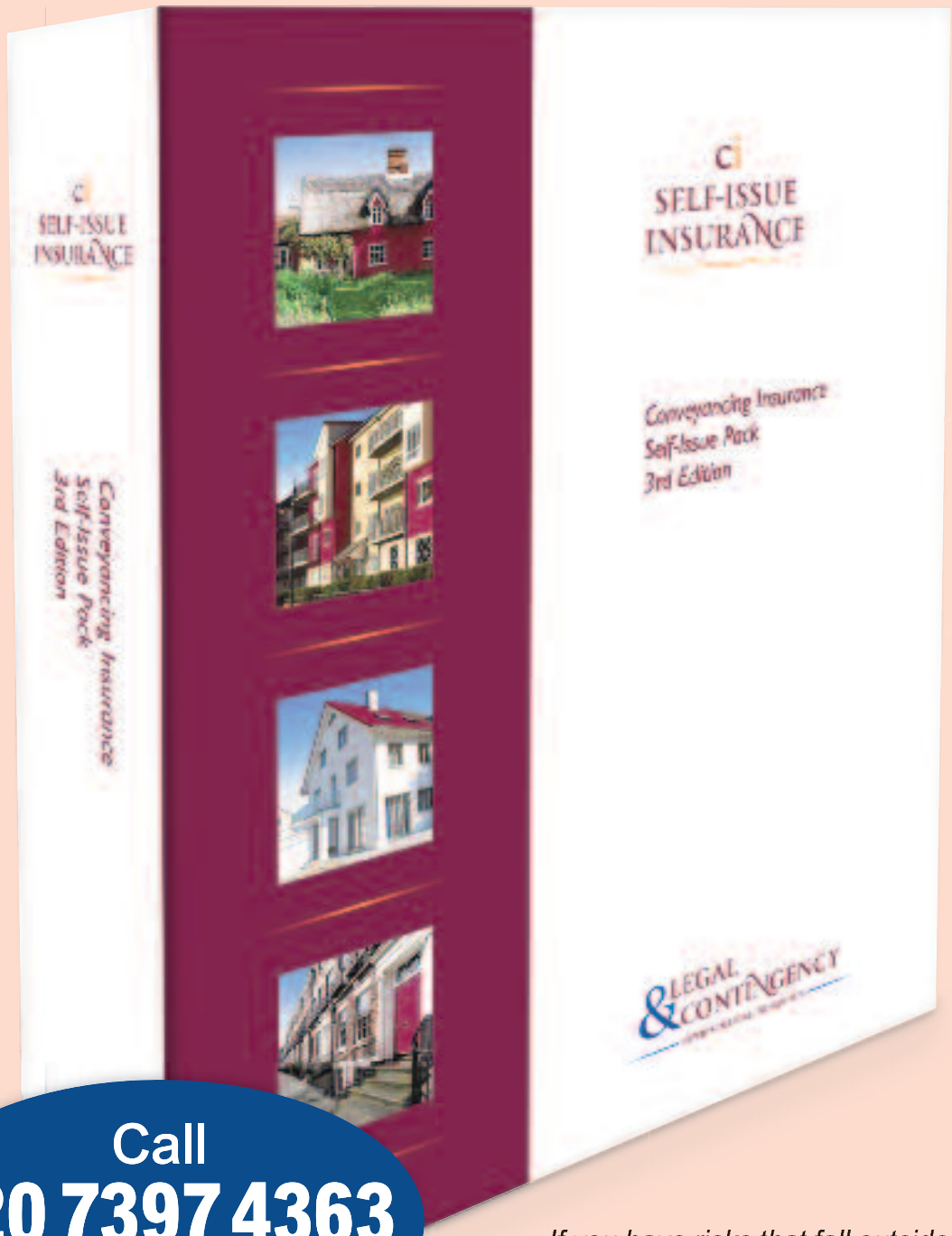

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Bar Pro Bono Award nomination

St Johns Buildings are delighted to announce that Ginnette Fitzharris has been nominated for the Bar Pro Bono Award 2015. The award is a celebration of an individual barrister, group of barristers, or set of chambers in recognition of outstanding commitment to pro bono work.

Ginnette Fitzharris

Ginnette was nominated by John Vater QC, who appeared alongside her in the case of Re G. Ginnette represented the mother pro bono, as she sought to revoke a placement Order made in relation to her child, AG.

Mr Vater stated "By her pro bono work Miss Fitzharris has changed AG's life forever, changed his mother's life forever, and in both cases in ways neither of them will ever forget. I cannot think of a better example of pro bono work."

Ginnette said: "I am delighted to have been nominated for the Bar Pro Bono Award. Pro Bono work is incredibly important to me personally and society generally and I am humbled to have my efforts recognised by this nomination."

Farleys expands with new Family Solicitor

Leading regional law firm Farleys Solicitors LLP have expanded with the appointment of family law Solicitor Amy Price.

Amy Price

As a qualified collaborative lawyer and Resolution Accredited Specialist Family Lawyer, Amy is regarded as an expert in matrimonial finances following separation or divorce. Heading up the family department at the firm's city centre office in Parsonage Gardens, Amy's expertise also extends into the highly emotive area of child law, providing advice for private clients regarding children disputes.

Working closely with the firm's four North West offices Amy will join the department's high calibre team of solicitors as they continue to provide comprehensive legal support across the full range of family law. Amy is the latest addition to the department as they continue to expand their reach in response to increased demand. The team, led by Partner Antonia Love, is widely recognised as a regional leader in all aspects of family law, in particular complex child cases and high value divorce settlements.

Partner and head of Family Law Antonia Love commented: "There is no doubt Amy will be a valued asset to the department, and we are very much looking forward to her joining the team. We are always on the lookout for the brightest talent in the region, allowing us to continue to remain one of the strongest and most diverse family law teams in the North West. We are very excited by what she can add to our established team."

Almond Solicitors puts long arm of the law around the Heatons with acquisition of Hugh Joseph McCarthy

A new partnership between two south Manchester solicitors is to broaden the range of legal services available to people living and working in the Heatons, and throughout Greater Manchester.

Hugh Joseph and Greg Almond

Droylsden-based Almond Solicitors has acquired Heaton Moor's long-established Hugh Joseph Solicitors on Heaton Moor Road, in a move that will strengthen both firms' combined 30 years of legal experience.

Its team of 25 will offer a broad range of services to those living and working locally, from personal injury claims to family, employment law and conveyancing services.

The team will also bolster its wills and probate team to provide peace of mind and support for families, every step of the way.

Partners Greg Almond and Hugh Joseph have a wealth of expertise, particularly in personal injury law, with Hugh being a specialist in cycling-related injury claims. The pair have delivered results for hundreds of satisfied customers.

Although Almond Solicitors are based in Droylsden, Greg lives in Heaton Mersey and his knowledge of the area and people will stand him in good stead to cater for the legal needs of Heatons residents and businesses. Greg will split his time between both offices while Hugh will still be based permanently in Heaton Moor.

Greg Almond, director of Almond Solicitors, said: "I love the Heatons, having lived here for five years. Our aim now is to offer a mix of experience, all delivered with a modern approach. We want to provide a one-stop legal solution for residents, small local businesses and sole traders, to make sure they've got everything they need on their doorstep."

Hugh Joseph, director of Hugh Joseph, said: "We have been serving the Heatons for almost 20 years and this is a hugely exciting development for us. Although the name and location won't change, our passionate team will be able to provide an even broader range of professional, friendly and affordable legal services to our Heatons neighbours."

Greg Almond founded Almond Solicitors 4 years ago. Hugh Joseph established his practice 18 years ago.

Slater Heelis welcomes VIP Client

Manchester and Cheshire-based law firm Slater Heelis welcomed client Melwyn Rego, CEO of the Bank of India, to Manchester, as part of his recent visit to the UK.

The CEO was over from India attending the global and regional heads' meeting for chief executives of the Bank of India in London, before making a special visit to Manchester.

Sunil Mohindra, partner at Slater Heelis – who has acted on behalf of the Bank of India for over 10 years – together with managing partner, Chris Bishop, took Melwyn Rego on a tour of the Manchester City Etihad stadium as part of the visit, which also saw him call in at the city's Bank of India branch.

Left to right: Sunil Mohindra, Melwyn Rego and Chris Bishop

The deadline for the December edition of The Messenger is 12th November

Jefferies Solicitors launches new flight delay claim service

Altrincham-based law firm, Jefferies Solicitors, is extending its legal offering to include a new delayed flight compensation service.

The new nationwide service will mean that customers whose flights have been cancelled, denied boarding or delayed by more than 3 hours, may be eligible to claim up to €600 compensation against the airline. The personal injury compensation specialist has developed a simple claims calculator on its website to determine the amounts that could be owed.

Expert advice and representation will be available on every aspect of flight claims, from lost deposits for hire cars to hotel charges and cancelled arrangements that have impacted on holidays. The specialist team has extensive experience in the sector to achieve the best settlements quickly and provide an efficient service with a personable approach.

The likelihood of recovering flight compensation has improved due to the recent case of Van der Lans v KLM decided by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) last week. In this case, the passenger was delayed by 29 hours in 2009. Dutch airline, KLM, rejected the claim for compensation, arguing that it should not be liable for a spontaneous technical issue emerging just before take off and that this falls into the category of an "extraordinary circumstance" – for which the airline would not have to pay compensation. The ECJ ruled against KLM in favour of the passenger and confirmed that a technical problem wasn't an extraordinary circumstance.

Research by the consumer group, Which?, recently revealed that 9,000 flights are delayed for three hours or more each year by this type of fault.

Michael Jefferies, managing director at Jefferies Solicitors, comments, "We're pleased to be extending our legal offering to cover flight claims, which is a growing sector due to changes in the law. The service will help those who have been inconvenienced due to a flight being delayed or cancelled and is a much more successful approach than sending a letter to the airline directly. Our specialist team offers complete transparency with no hidden fees, making sure clients are kept fully informed during the process."

New Head of Compliance for JMW

Full service law firm JMW Solicitors LLP has recruited Adam Entwistle as its Head of Compliance.

Adam joins JMW from Weightmans LLP where he was a Compliance Consultant for over 2 years. He previously worked at LBS Legal. Adam specialises in regulatory compliance and risk management and has previously undertaken project management of ABS applications and solicitors disciplinary tribunal defence work. Adam will join JMW's management team and work closely on all compliance and risk management matters with JMW's Chairman Bill Jones.

Adam has also delivered seminars on ABS applications and anti-money laundering and co-authored a book on professional indemnity insurance.

Commenting on Adam's appointment, Bill Jones, Chairman at JMW said:"We are pleased to welcome Adam to the management team at JMW to work across the firm's compliance and risk matters. He has gained excellent experience in his previous roles and I am looking forward to working alongside him."

Adam Entwistle

Children 4 Most enjoys growth spurt

A chain of children's nurseries has increased capacity with an extension at one of its three sites, and bosses are eyeing further growth as they seek a fourth location in Greater Manchester.

Nicola Sullivan, Alison Davies and Sheila Baldwin established Children 4 Most in 2000 and their nurseries in Ashton-under-Lyne, Hyde and Audenshaw now cater for more than 200 youngsters aged 0-5. They employ a total of 103 staff.

The Hyde nursery, at Flowery Field, has been extended with a new conservatory which increases capacity by 26 places to 76, a rise of 52 per cent.

Now Children 4 Most is considering further expansion, with plans to extend the Audenshaw nursery and a search for a fourth site, potentially in Stockport or another in Tameside.

Its growth comes as demand for nursery provision rises following government measures to increase the number of free childcare places for working parents. Paul Westwell, a partner at Bromleys Solicitors who heads the firm's corporate and commercial team, is advising Children 4 Most on its growth plans.

He said: "Children 4 Most is a well-run chain which provides an excellent service to families throughout Tameside.

"The additional space at Hyde provides a much-needed facility which enhances the nursery's offering.

"We have been involved with the business for many years and are delighted to be advising Nicola, Alison and Sheila given their ambitious growth plans amid rising demand."

Nicola said: "We have reorganised our Hyde nursery and the new conservatory is allocated as a baby room, fully equipped with sensory and soft play equipment as well as cots and everything else the babies require.

"We needed to expand the nursery because of growing demand, and we are looking to repeat this in Audenshaw and to potentially open another site in Tameside or Stockport."

Children 4 Most is rated by Ofsted inspectors as outstanding and its nurseries are ranked as being of high or exceptional quality by the National Day Nurseries Association. The chain has also achieved Investors in People status.

Management Conference continued...

finding himself a Partner at one of the world's 20 largest law firms

• Dan Clark of JMW introduced us to the 'intention economy', with constant developments online putting more control into the hands of the buyer of services, and drew our attention to the need for law firms to get much smarter and better at identifying potential client interest and dealing expertly with enquiries. A series of speakers gave insights into how they had improved their handling of enquiries and overall client service at their firms, often utilising specialists who only handle enquiries.

That improvement is something that Doug Hargrove of Advanced Legal pointed out that many firms needed, with recent evidence showing that 34% of enquiry messages left were not responded to within 24 hours

• Echoing Doug's message, Simon McCrum, CEO at Darbys, drove home the message that the biggest and most important source of new business and the focus of your business development effort should be existing clients – firms should "build on your base"

• We heard plenty of practical examples of firms working hard to put 'clients at the core' of their business, with the use of mystery shopping and easy-to-complete client service feedback to the fore.

This rigorous emphasis on what all clients think about the service they receive seems to be fast becoming one of the hallmarks of a quality firm

• As we enter the digital era the capabilities lawyers need are changing. I used these two quotes to demonstrate that gap: Gerry Riskin of Edge International is a seasoned law firm consultant in the USA and Canada and observed that "too many lawyers pride themselves on their IT incompetencies, believing that it makes them somehow charming and brilliant." By contrast, legal academics Goodenough & Lauritsen in Educating the Digital Lawyer wrote that "Digital lawyers have the ability to search large electronic data sets and to find legally relevant and authoritative information in the process of representing a client."

• Many of the presentations were underpinned by a message that all Partners were required to adhere to a fundamental set of core values and rules.

The message from a series of Managing Partners was 'we don't tolerate mavericks who won't comply with the basic financial and client hygiene factors'. In the new model partnership these mutual obligations to each other are critical – as is enforcing discipline and not becoming, as Sarah Taylor from Optimality warned us, "a dysfunctional family"

• Identifying and focusing objectives, reward and remuneration around the 'highest and best use' of each Partner and member of staff is another feature of the new model Partnership – some of the progressive thinking firms on our programme had challenged the expectation that every Partner had to be stellar across every dimension of performance

• Viv Williams of 360 Group had some words of warning about the routes some, weaker, Partnerships may be forced down – relying on being acquired by a consolidator or hoping to sell your bank of work-in-progress, on over-use of personal loans or on Partners working years past their desired retirement date to keep the ship afloat

But the overall message of the day was a positive one. Contrary to the received wisdom that most law firms are impossibly slow to change, delegates heard a range of speakers, including Scott Harding of Poole Alcock, Joanna Kingston-Davies of Lees and Simon McCrum of Darbys demonstrate that a determined leadership team could achieve dramatic positive transformation in a firm, putting clients first and harnessing the power of technology and process thinking.

Special thanks to Bill Kirby and Professional Choice Consultancy who organised the conference with Manchester Law Society.

Chris Bull
Executive Director,
Kingsmead Square
Chair, Manchester Law Society Management Conference

Ground-breaking discrmination case has impact across practice areas

In a decision that is likely to have significant implications in the spheres of commercial, corporate, employment and property law, Mr Justice Langstaff has decided in the case of EAD Solicitors v Abrams that companies can bring claims for discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

Background

EAD Solicitors LLP ('EAD') is a limited liability partnership. Prior to 30th November 2011, Mr Garry Abrams was a member of EAD. On 30th November 2011, Mr Abrams retired as a member of EAD and was by replaced by Garry Abrams Limited ('GAL').

GAL is a limited company that was established by Mr Abrams on the advice of his accountants. In what is an increasingly common method of operating for professional firms, Mr Abrams established GAL to benefit from the advantageous tax scheme applicable to limited companies. GAL was admitted as a member of EAD on the basis that it would provide a solicitor to participate in management decisions and to generate fee income.
During 2013 EAD made it known to Mr Abrams that it expected him to cease working at the end of the financial year in which he turned 62, that being 2014. At the end of the 2014 LLP Year, EAD stopped paying GAL its profit share. GAL brought a claim before the Employment Tribunal seeking payment of its profit share. GAL alleged that all 'members' are entitled to a share of the profits and that to deny GAL the same because Mr Abrams had reached the age of 62 was unlawful direct discrimination. EAD deny discriminating against GAL and sought a preliminary hearing to have the claim struck out on the basis that a company cannot bring claim for discrimination

Langstaff P, sitting as President of the Employment Appeal Tribunal, held that companies can bring claims for discrimination and that, depending on the right infringed, such claims can be brought in the Employment Tribunal and the County Court. In rejecting EAD's argument that a company cannot bring a claim because it cannot have a protected characteristic, Langstaff P said that it does not matter that a limited company or other corporate entity does not possess the protected characteristic in question. He observed that "the Equality Act does not deal with individuals on the basis of their protected characteristics but identifies discrimination as being detrimental treatment caused by the protected characteristic or related to it. Detrimental treatment can be given to any person, whether that person is natural or legal.

There is no reason to restrict the class of those who can suffer a detriment if what is being complained of, and that which the statute seeks to avoid, is a detriment being suffered because of an individual's protected characteristic."

Consequences of decision

A narrow reading of the judgment highlights the possibility that professional firms may be the subject of discrimination claims in circumstances where they seek to retire those former partners/members who have sought to benefit from the advantageous tax scheme that Mr Abrams adopted. However, the decision is likely to have much wider consequences.

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate in the supply of goods and services. The decision in Abrams means that it would be unlawful to refuse to supply goods and services to a company because of a protected characteristic. Take, for example, a limited company that is refused banking services because of the race of its directors. Such a refusal would amount to direct discrimination. Similarly, a refusal to provide services to a bar because it was frequented by homosexuals would likewise amount to unlawful discrimination. What was previously viewed as an unconscionable business decision would now give rise to an actionable claim before the County Court.

In relation to the the disposal of premises, Abrams confirms that a company, LLP, charity, educational establishment, or other non-natural person may pursue a claim in the County Court if it receives detrimental treatment based on the protected characteristics of individuals associated with it. A commercial landlord who refuses to lease premises to a company because of the nationality of its managing director would be committing an act of direct discrimination.

The most significant impact of the decision in Abrams is likely to be the unenforceability of commercial contractual terms. Section 142 provides that a term is unenforceable against a person in so far as it constitutes, promotes or provides for treatment of that or another person that is of a description prohibited by the Act. Terms of a commercial agreement between two corporate entities will not be enforceable so far as they offend this principle. By way of example, a term that requires a company to only employ Asian people or to purchase its products from an American based company could be viewed as promoting discriminatory treatment.

The decision in Abrams may also impact on the arrangement of group companies. In ordinary circumstances, financial liability for an act of discrimination would not pass from one company to another. However, section 111 provides that 'A person (A) must not instruct another (B) to do in relation to a third person (C) anything which contravenes' certain parts of the Act. If company A instructed company B to sack C because of C's disability, then C would be able to pursue a claim against A as well as B. On the basis of Abrams, section 111 can be read so as to allow the employee to pursue a group company.

Steven Flynn

Prior to the decision in EAD Solicitors v Abrams accepted wisdom was that the Equality Act 2010 only applied to natural persons. Langstaff P has corrected this misconception. Companies and other legal entitles can now pursue claims for discrimination in circumstances where they suffer detriment because of a protected characteristic. This is a ground-breaking decision which is likely to have significant impact across many practice areas. Lawyers who have never considered the Equality Act 2010 will now have to become familiar with its provisions and the implications of this decision.

Steven Flynn is a barrister specialising in matters with an Employment, Sporting (including disciplinary) and Contractual nature and continues to represent Mr Abrams in the matter discussed in this article (instructed by Aaron & Partners).

Northern Congratulations to Lord Justice Ryder

The Circuit has a very proud tradition and record of Judicial promotions.

Lord Justice Ryder was recently appointed as the Senior President of Tribunals.

This follows a distinguished career on the Northern Circuit where he was a member of Deans Court Chambers since 1998.

He was appointed a Judge of the High Court of Justice, Family Division on 4 May 2004 and appointed Lord Justice of Appeal and privy counsellor in 2013.

On the 2nd October an oath was sworn in the Lord Chief's Court at the Royal Courts of Justice to recognise this appointment. Best wishes for his new role were offered by the Lord Chief Justice followed by a response from Gerard McDermott QC who responded on behalf of the Bar. This provided a short history of some the achievements of Lord Justice Ryder and also those of the Northern Circuit. History shows that these achievements should continue. Also in attendance was Jonathan Smithers, President of the Law Society. The picture shows Lord Justice Ryder with his former clerk, Matthew Gibbons the Senior Clerk of Deans Court who had been invited as a guest with family, friends and Judicial Clerk, Brian Walker.

Matthew commented "The swearing in ceremony was a great occasion to witness and those invited felt very proud to be there as guests. Not only is this a fantastic achievement for Sir Ernest but also for the Northern Circuit. This could not have been achieved without the friendship and support from the Bar and Solicitors who have worked with him since he was called to the Bar in 1981"

Homeless successfully challenge Manchester City Council

A case brought by Manchester City Council against the homeless camp in Albert Square for breaching an injunction against pitching tents in protest has been rejected by the Courts.

The camp, known as the "Ark" was created in Albert Square in April. However the Council applied for an order to remove them. The initial injunction order made on 31st July by District Judge Matharu prohibited anyone from "erecting and/or occupying tents or other movable temporary forms of accommodation for the purposes of or in connection with protests or similar events arising from or connected with the Claimant's [Manchester City Council's] homeless policy on land", within a specified area of the city "without the Claimant's consent or the consent of the lawful occupier of the land."

Ben Taylor of WTB Solicitors has been representing some of the protesters of the camp since April on a pro bono basis said at the time "The injunction has been served against my clients and persons unknown which means it applies to every single person in the whole world"

"My advice to all the homeless in Manchester and surrounding area is not to sleep in any other temporary form of accommodation other than sleeping bags or blankets, cardboard boxes, park benches, doorways, bus shelters or any accommodation offered by charities or they would face up to two years imprisonment".

In September the courts granted Manchester Metropolitan Universitya possession order of the land occupied by the residents. On the 11th of September the camp was handed a civil eviction notice for Friday the 18th, and the residents were granted six days to appeal the eviction.

The Legal Aid Agency refused public funding to the protesters on the grounds that this situation was not within scope since the restrictions implemented on 1st April 2013 pursuant to Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012.

However, Judge Allan Gore QC rejected the separate committal application to commit the defendants to prison, and the Council was ordered to pay the defendants' legal costs, which could reach thousands.

Judge Allan Gore said the way the Council had presented its case was "fundamentally defective." Dismissing the Council's case, he said: "There is no dates, descriptions of behaviour or identification of which allegations are made against which defendant.

"That is a fundamentally misconceived and inappropriate way to advance criminal proceedings, where the Council seeks that the court orders to commit people to prison."

Judge Gore also stated that the Council couldn't even prove that some of the defendants had ever seen the injunction.

Ben Taylor warns though that the Council could still take action against those breaching the order again. He said "The application to commit was dismissed on procedural grounds and my clients are content with the outcome of today's hearing. However the injunction remains in force, which means that the Council are still able to apply to commit them to prison again."

Ben adds that many homeless who had requested support from the Council had been refused because they were deemed to be 'intentionally homeless'. "The local authority's stance in assessing whether someone is unintentionally homeless or not is being applied too strictly."

Despite the application by the Council being rejected the injunction remains in place, but Council have stated they are working to develop a strategy around homelessness in Manchester and are committed to addressing the needs of the homeless.

Ben Taylor of WTB Solicitors who represented a number of the protestors

This roundtable event is your opportunity to discuss the importance of pro bono work and how it can help you to achieve your legal and business objectives. The facilitated interactive session will cover all the business elements of pro bono activities including costs, risk, benefits, time involved and the potential connections with corporate responsibility.

The roundtable format will give you an opportunity to network with your peers, share insights and best practice, and debate the future direction of pro bono.

This event is aimed at:

- Lawyers and organisations that are new to pro bono and want to find out more about how it works.
- Lawyers and organisations that are looking to develop their existing pro bono programmes.
- Anyone who wants to know more about how to set up and deliver innovative and effective pro bono programmes.

DATE
Friday 6 November 2015

TIME
Registration & Breakfast at 08:45,
Discussion from 09:15, Ending at 10:45

LOCATION
DLA Piper UK LLP, 101 Barbirolli Square, Bridgewater, Manchester, M2 3DL

RSVP
https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-business-case-for-pro-bono-manchester-tickets-18819146574

For more information on this event, please contact Amy Heading, UK Pro Bono Manager & Counsel, amy.heading@dlapiper.com

www.dlapiperprobono.com

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Landmark success in the Supreme Court for Sally Harrison QC and Samantha Hillas

After four months of deliberation, the Supreme Court handed down the much awaited judgments in the high profile cases of Sharland and Gohil.

The Supreme Court decided in favour of Mrs Gohil and Mrs Sharland – which will open up a radical change in the way courts handle divorce payouts in cases based on false or incomplete financial information. Mrs Gohil had originally accepted a divorce settlement of £270,000 and a car. Six years later her former husband was jailed for 10 years for fraud and money laundering amounting to around £37m. During his trial, evidence of the extent to which he had hidden his wealth during the original settlement emerged.

Head of Chambers at St John's Buildings, Sally Harrison QC, was leading counsel for Mrs Gohil. Samantha Hillas of SJB was junior counsel, both instructed by Ros Bever of Irwin Mitchell solicitors.

Miss Harrison commented: "The ruling today in the Supreme Court ends an 11 year battle for Mrs Gohil to achieve the right to a fair hearing of her financial claims. We are delighted to have been able to fight on her behalf to achieve a successful outcome for her in the Supreme Court."

Sally Harrison QC

Talking Heads

This month we posed the question "Lord Sumption's remarks on gender equality in the judiciary have sparked concerns about the lack of diversity in some areas outside Manchester and the higher courts. Do you think that positive discrimination is the answer?"

HHJ Potter
Presiding Judge
Minshull Street Crown Court

Greater diversity within the judiciary is to be encouraged.

Public confidence in our legal system will be assisted by the judiciary being as diverse as possible in seeking to reflect all parts of our communities. How further diversity is to be achieved is a matter for the Judicial Appointments Commission who are tasked with the implementation of the policies of the Government in this regard. It is a matter for Government as to whether these policies invoke any element of positive discrimination.

It is a privilege and honour to receive judicial appointment - the obligations of which judges do their best to meet, I anticipate with a degree of humility.

Appointments to judicial office must ultimately be made on the basis of merit.

Michael Hardacre
Principal Lawyer,
Slater and Gordon
Vice President,
Manchester Law Society

I read the recent comments from Lord Sumption on the issue of women in the judiciary with weary resignation. I find it hard to believe that we are still debating the rights and wrongs of this in 2015, when the fact is plainly that we have a legal profession which presents obstacles to preferment to female practitioners, which have been entrenched in the legal profession for generations. At the present rate of promotion it will take another generation before there is anything approaching parity. That is not acceptable.

The simple fact is that the pool of appropriately qualified and experienced female practitioners is demonstrably large enough. Positive discrimination is the only viable way to address the issue of gender inequality and, for that matter, the lack of racial diversity in the judiciary in the short to medium term. It will no doubt be unpalatable to some men who may feel that they have overlooked for preferment. My view is that this is a difficult but necessary step to take to rectify a wholly unacceptable status quo.

Alison Bull
Partner
Mills & Reeve

I wish positive discrimination wasn't necessary. However without question the evidence is compelling that it is. The problem is that the criteria, framework and process have all evolved under the custodianship of white able-bodied straight upper/middle-class men for white able-bodied straight upper/middle-class men. This is for historical reasons, but we have to recognise that effective sociological change takes generations. At best, this has happened because of unintended embedded gender bias of influential figures. At worst it is the old boys' network looking after itself. In my view we need to make it easier for men to become fully-involved father figures at home, and to be able to work part-time to fulfil a family role without criticism or discrimination, and for women to gain equality of status, pay and career opportunity in the workplace; whether it be in the courts, on the boards of international companies or in any other job. We also need good quality day care for children and an acceptance of the need for flexible working whilst children are very young and need the day to day care of their most important attachment figures; their parents.

Joy Kingsley
Senior Partner
JMW Solicitors LLP

In an ideal work positive discrimination would not be necessary .However I am in favour of positive discrimination to ensure that women (and those who would also benefit from greater diversity) are properly represented at all levels both in the Profession and the Boardroom. Attempts should be made to persuade women that they can compete at the highest levels.

It doesn't seem that the position is improving despite the diversity agenda being well known in companies and the Profession.. So compulsory quotas should be brought in to alleviate the problem.

There are many women who would make suitable high level candidates who are female , but they need to be sought out and positively encouraged.

I cannot say that I have ever been subject to discrimination in any of the many years I have worked in our Profession.

It should also be said that greater male Partner numbers in law firms is not evidence that there is widespread discrimination against women . While there are many more female trainees ,there is an element of choice by some female lawyers in relation to career progression .

Jeff Lewis
Partner and Head of Litigation
Brabners LLP, Manchester

Despite the furore that Lord Sumption's comments caused in some quarters, all that he said, in essence, was that we should give judicial jobs to the best candidates - hardly a revolutionary statement! How many of us ever recruited anyone on any other basis?

The best candidate for a job on the Bench may well be female, or a member of an ethnic minority ... or indeed a white male - but once you move away from the principle of automatically appointing the best person for a judicial job, you risk diluting the quality of the judiciary.

Lord Sumption identified that one downside of positive discrimination is that a person who doesn't possess the preferred characteristics (who might be the best person for the job) might be put off from applying. Given the resentment and the divisions that this could generate, such an outcome certainly wouldn't be good for society, and nor could it assist in the objective of getting the best people appointed to the Bench.

His Honour Judge
Stockdale QC,
Honorary Recorder of Manchester

I'm faintly surprised that you have asked me. Until about a year ago, the Crown Courts in Manchester were unable to boast a single full-time, female criminal judge. We had several first class mixed-ticket female judges but not one sitting 100% on crime. That shameful state of affairs was finally rectified, when three full-time women judges were appointed to Crown Square and Minshull Street. But this is no time for complacency and we must continue to encourage women to apply for judicial office. The UK Association of Women Judges and the Associations of Women Barristers and Women Solicitors respectively work hard to spread the message and I see that the JAC now operates its 'tie-break' provision under which, if two or more candidates for judicial office are of equal merit, they may select a candidate to increase judicial diversity. Beyond that, I don't think we should go. Would it serve the interests of current women judges or those who aspire to appointment, if selections were made otherwise than on merit? I doubt it.

Louise Straw
Partner, Burton Copeland
President of Manchester Law Society

Lord Sumptions remarks on gender quality inevitably led to many comments from female lawyers, both barristers and solicitors. The implication of his comments was that women "did not make it to the top" due to a life style choice because we are apparently unwilling to face long hours and tough working conditions. This is one lady lawyer who has never baulked at working long hours and has thrived on the tough working conditions which are found when one is involved in the running of a busy criminal practice. I for one do not advocate positive discrimination for any one particular group – women or otherwise. I have always found that hard work pays in the end and I have only ever wanted to achieve because I am the best not because someone else has not been able to compete against me.

Probate: The Myth of Accounts Integration

The buzzword used by many law firms is integration, usually without understanding what it means, and with-out properly evaluating the perceived benefits against the actual benefits.

There are many areas of legal work in which software integration is beneficial, particularly when buying spe-cialist software from different sources.

It is clearly useful to have a specialist case manage-ment system that can extract data from your practice management system, and merge the output to Mi-crosoft Word or to your email system. It is also funda-mental to be able to enter your basic client details once only into your practice management system (PMS), where you would conduct your client identity and mon-ey laundering checks, without having to enter this data a second time into your case management system.

Client monies into and out of the firm belong to the do-main of the client account ledger of your practice man-agement system. Your cashier or accounts department ensures that the total of your client accounts always matches the total of client funds in the bank account. This reconciliation is fundamental.

The issue that I wish to address is the attempt to inte-grate your probate client accounts with your PMS client ledger. Integration between the two would mean the ability to make a single entry posting into both client accounts. Is it feasible or fantasy?

"There is a plethora of detail that you will need to record in your probate accounting system that has no place in your firm's client account, and which is of minimal concern to your cashier."

Your cashier is primarily concerned with money in and money out of your client account, with only marginal concern with the actual breakdown and analysis of the funds received. What those funds represent are rela-tively easily managed by the practitioners of the various departments.

By contrast your probate team will want to know the detail of each transaction. What is the breakdown of a cheque or transfer from the stockbroker? How many shares have been sold? What was the value of the individual shares? Some of them might have been allo-cated to a specific beneficiary. Were any dividends included in the transfer? And at which income tax rate?

How will the probate team treat the breakdown of a single transfer from the bank into the firm's client ac-count, when that single transfer might represent more than one bank account? It might well include an ele-ment of interest.

How will they deal with the distinction between pre and post death income in the firm's client account, especial-ly when the statement arrives from the bank three weeks later. Inheritance tax is due on pre-death in-come, whereas income tax is due on that same pre-death income, plus post-death income.

"Our terms are 30 days net. It means that if you do not pay within 30 days, we will come after you with a net."

Where will you record the value of the various stocks and shares prior to any sale by the stockbroker, and prior to any money having been received by the firm? How will you deal with values when one beneficiary wants the money for the BT shares, while the others want to keep the shares? How will your cashier keep track of these distinctions in the PMS client account? Your cashier is not fundamentally concerned with these distinctions, but you will need to record and track the financial breakdown of each transaction - ideally in a dedicated probate accounting system that allows you the flexibility that is not available in the firm's account-ing system.

It is redundant for your practice management system to contain a click and pick list of probate registries or fu-neral directors or a list of stock exchange shares with correct SEDOL and ISIN numbers. Or even to maintain a profit and loss account for each of 30 plus properties owned by the deceased for example, some with mort-gages, and some lease owned, each with various charges against the property. These features are of little relevance to the other departments in the firm. Your PMS client account is not designed for the finan-cial complexity that is an intrinsic part of estate admin-istration.

There is a plethora of detail that you will need to record in your probate accounting system that has no place in your firm's client account, and which is of minimal con-cern to your cashier.

Considering these issues, it is clear that in order to properly manage your deceased estates, you will need a dedicated probate accounting system.

You will of course need to reconcile the totals of the two client accounts from time to time, but trying to inte-grate the two makes no sense whatsoever. Any such attempt belongs to the realm of IT mythology.

Isokon

For further information please contact: Gregory van Dyk Watson, Managing Director of Isokon Limited.
Email: gregory@isokon.com or call 020 7482 6555. Alternatively visit www.isokon.com

Isokon was founded by Gregory van Dyk Watson in 1999. The company has invested 44,000 man hours in development of the product over the last 16 years. The company is currently the leading supplier of software for Probate and Private Client work. Isokon is used by 40% of law firms who do private client work. It is used by more than 2,000 individual users. Isokon is used for the most complex estates, as well as basic estates. Isokon is based on an accounting database engine with an integrated Isokon case management component.

Alternatively visit **www.isokon.com**

Cellar Beware!

In the current market with high moving costs; basement conversions are no longer the preserve of the superheroes like Batman. Landlords seeking to increase lettable space or families needing to add extra rooms are increasingly looking underground for additional space.

If your client simply wants to change a cellar into living space, this may be regarded as a change of use and may not require planning permission. However if plans includes structural works (such as a new light well) then it may be required. It will also be needed if new self-contained accommodation is created. Works altering the exterior may also require planning permission.

Where the plan is to excavate new underground accommodation then planning will be a necessity.

Whatever the requirement for planning permission, works to extend the property will always require Building Regulations approval. These cover both the structural soundness of the extension and arrangements for continued use (such as fire safety arrangements, use of potentially toxic materials and Electrical safety). Basement conversions will often require extensive damp proofing works (including tanking) which will need Building Regulations approval.

Listed Buildings or properties within a Conservation Area will be subject to extra controls if the works affect the appearance or character of the building. When the interior is listed then consent may be needed for internal works.
When basement conversions are being planned for a terraced or semi-detached building; you will need to advise your client about Party Wall Act requirements. The Party Wall Act 1996 sets out when an agreement is required and the procedure to be followed.

When acting for a buyer you should always consider these points where the property has or appears to have been the subject of a basement conversion. Standard pre-contract enquiries should reveal any works but where there is any indication that works have been carried out or where further information is required additional enquiries should be raised. You will need to see relevant planning permissions or (in their absence) evidence of why they were not sought; building regulations approval and listed building consents (where applicable). Plans should be checked to see if any Party Wall Act notices were required and whether any works have encroached onto neighbouring land.

Where it becomes clear that relevant approvals or consents were not obtained or where other defects are revealed then Indemnity Insurance may be available and you should require the seller to obtain this or to make allowance for the cost of this. Stewart Title Limited are able to offer a full complement of policies to protect a buyer in these circumstances and full details of these can be obtained from us.london@stewart.com or 02070107820)

To discuss the issues raised in this article or for any other queries you have regarding our products, please contact Robert Kelly on 07415 240 703 or robert.kelly@stewart.com.

Robert Kelly, Commercial Business Development Manager, Stewart Title Limited

Robert joined Stewart Title in 2013 after 25 years of experience as a Commercial Property lawyer specialising in development and portfolio management. This experience plays a vital part in his role working closely with the Property industry to use Indemnity Insurance to resolve title problems and speed up transactions.

"When acting for a buyer you should always consider these points where the property has or appears to have been the subject of a basement conversion. Standard pre-contract enquiries should reveal any works but where there is any indication that works have been carried out or where further information is required additional enquiries should be raised."

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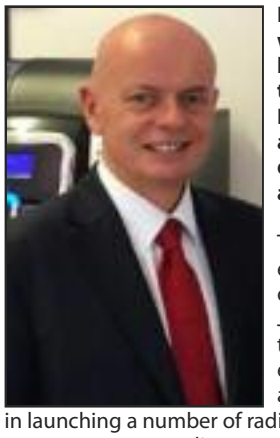
Manchester Business Radio hits the airwaves

Launched just last month, Manchester Business Radio is the UK's first broadcast radio station totally dedicated to business – company owners, directors, decision makers, business professionals, start-ups and entrepreneurs. CEO David Duffy talks to Julia Baskerville...



Earlier this year Manchester was selected to trial a number of new digital radio stations. Cheshire-based Niocast Digital was awarded a licence and had just 90 days to get the station up and running.

The station is led by Chief Executive David Duffy and Head of Programming and Content, John Evington. Between them they have many years experience in the broadcast industry and have been instrumental in launching a number of radio stations. John was a former group programme director at The Wireless Group and has also presented programmes on many stations including BBC Radio 2 and Manchester's Piccadilly Radio.

However, Manchester Business Radio is significantly different from other radio stations. David Duffy says "Manchester Business Radio is a B4B station, aimed at business owners, decision makers, directors and entrepreneurs. There are no presenters and no adverts and the voices you hear are those of Manchester business people. "

David adds "Our aim is to create a radio station, which informs, involves and inspires Manchester's business community; a station where businesses can showcase and share their successes".

Manchester Business Radio broadcasts 24-hours each day from the heart of the city from where it can be heard on DAB digital radio and online.

The station is precision targeted at an aspirational ABC1 audience of some 30,000 company owners, and 130,000 decision makers, entrepreneurs and business professionals who live or work in Manchester.

David and John have identified 33 key areas or disciplines within the law, that legal practices may wish to promote to the wider business community.

A law firm typically selects four areas of differentiation, and with the help of Manchester Business Radio, produce three 2-minute audio features showcasing their areas of skill and expertise. These features are broadcast rotationally throughout the day and across the week to give maximum exposure. These are played a minimum of 8 times a day and a campaign usually last for 12 weeks.

The audio features are also made available on the law firms branded web page, where it can listened to 'on demand'.

Manchester Business Radio is working closely with the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and is in the process of setting up a recording studio at the Chamber's premises at Elliot House on Deansgate, where contributors can record their audio features.

David says that they are currently developing a phone app, which will allow users to listen to the live stream, catch up on past programmes or simply record their own audio contribution. They also plan to launch a series of media and broadcast training courses for those who feel they would benefit.

David concludes "Audio is the one area that social media still hasn't conquered. I believe that Manchester Business Radio is pioneering in providing a platform for businesses to talk to other businesses. This new format is a reflection of the changing ways that we now consume media."

For further information please visit www.manchesterbusinessradio.co.uk

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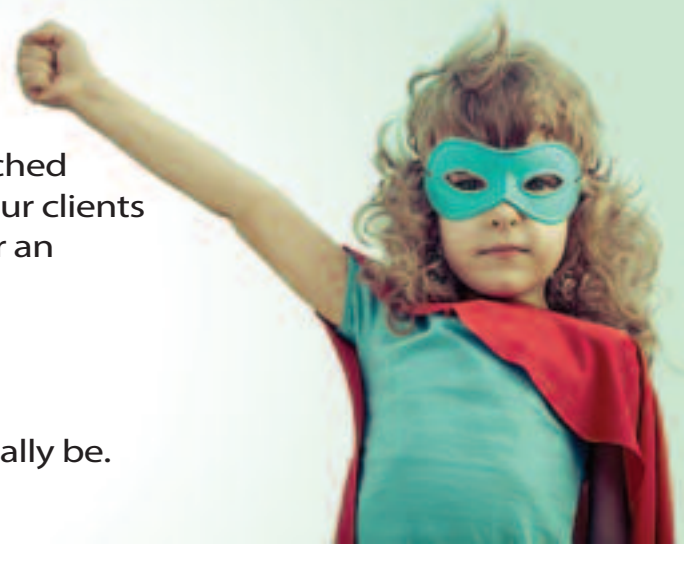

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During the 1990s the Poulton-Le-Fylde based business established a relationship with the Law Society and the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors and were instrumental in assisting law firms to integrate Rule 15 into the practice as well as helping to develop and enhance client care procedures.

The majority of law firms are aware how both their marketing strategy and branding are crucial in generating new clients as well as cross-selling legal services to existing clients. The Client Care Portfolios, professionally designed and printed to the highest standards by Estates and Law provide detailed information about the range of services offered by the practice as well as providing a practical file for clients to retain all their important legal documentation.

To date, Estates and Law have worked with over 2000 law firms around the UK. Steve Cunningham, the company's Managing Director says "The legal profession in 2015 is very different from that of twenty years ago, and as the profession has developed, we too have had to enhance and develop new products and services to meet the ever-changing needs of the modern law firm."

With this in mind, Estates and Law have added website development and design, web hosting, social network creation, SEO and a design and print service to their portfolio of products for the legal profession.

Steve Cunningham adds "As the legal profession has evolved, so has Estates and Law. We recognise that law firms are facing tougher regulation and competition and we can assist pro-active law firms to gain that competitive edge."

If you are interested in discovering how Estates and Law can provide your firm with a range of bespoke marketing solutions please call 01253 892111 or visit www.estates-law.co.uk

Claims at the County Court Money Claims Centre

Michael Hardacre, Principal Lawyer at Slater and Gordon reports on the recent meeting of the CCMCC Stakeholder Group

We have recently passed the third anniversary of the introduction of the centralisation of Part 7 Money Claims at the County Court Money Claims Centre (CCMCC) in Salford. I sit on the CCMCC Stakeholder Group which meets quarterly and we agreed with Martin Huddleston, Operations Manager at CCMCC that it was a good opportunity to reach out to practitioners to discuss the progress that has been made in the last three years and look at forthcoming developments.

Slater & Gordon hosted the meeting and there were claimant and defendant personal injury practitioners represented as well as commercial litigators. All involved agreed it was a really useful forum to exchange views and inevitably to air concerns from both sides.

Points of note start with the simple consideration of scale. CCMCC receive over 4000 items of post and 2000 emails a day. With emails they have implemented various efficiencies to make sure that emails are allocated to the appropriate team as quickly as possible and practitioners who have filed documents by email will know that there is an automated response which reminds all of the appropriate method by which emails should be filed. With the introduction of Fee Account, a new Practice Direction PD5B, comes into effect on the 7th December 2015. It will enable customers to email all documents relating to civil cases to the CCMCC or their local county courts as appropriate. This includes request for issue of process as long as they have a Fee Account number or credit/debit card details. However, there are a number of restrictions to this – it excludes (1) the issue of Specified and Unspecified money claims and (2) if the document exceeds 50 pages when printed out (this includes service copies).

Their internal target for issuing proceedings is five working days and CCMCC is currently within that at four working days.

CCMCC are working closely with their Loughborough call centre to increase the knowledge of the call centre operatives to deal with as many front line enquiries as possible so that customers are not 'handed off' to CCMCC for their staff to respond to enquiries.

Fee remissions are clearly a pressing issue for local practitioners. The good news is that the lengthy guidance and the application form itself are both being reviewed and significantly reduced and simplified, which was welcomed. The "Help With Fees" project is looking to implement this new process across all civil and family courts throughout October and November 2015.

The CCMCC are now working with Legal Advisors as part of a 12 month pilot which commenced on the 1st October 2015. The advisors have 16 delegated functions and have a District Judge mentoring them. Any court order which has been made by a legal advisor will indicate clearly that is the case on the face of the order. There is no need to make an application to vary an order made by a legal advisor but you can ask for the order to be reviewed (by a Judge), this can be done by letter within 14 days. The pilot is for 12 months..

There was some debate about what happens in the extremely infrequent but occasional instance where CCMCC have served proceedings despite instructions to return documents for service. In mitigation CCMCC did point out that there is no consistent application of the way in which claimant solicitors ask for solicitor service and it was suggested that a preferred method be included in their "top tips" for practitioners which has been circulated widely. An alternative suggestion in the long term is to have a tick box on the claim form to ensure that the solicitors' service point is clearly indicated on a consistent basis.

Michael Hardacre
Vice President, Manchester Law Society
Principal Lawyer, Slater and Gordon

Management Matters

This column is now into its fifth year and feedback is still good. We would still like to receive observations and ideas for future issues. Please mail Bill Kirby at billkirby@professionalchoiceconsultancy.com or the publisher Julia Baskerville at j.baskerville@jbaskerville.co.uk

Perhaps the Biggest Threat – Urgent Action Needed and Immediate Support Available – Act Now – Read Urgently

Law firms are prime targets for cybercrime offences.

We will have all seen this.

"Solicitor being scammed out of moving over £734,000 of a client's money to the criminals account"

Two weeks before I spoke at a Legal 360 Event and it was the hot topic with the playing of a recording between a con man and the staff of a law firm.

And now…..
"The crime rate for England and Wales has doubled to more than 11.6m offences, according to the latest figures. The sharp rise in the headline figures is due to the inclusion of an estimated 5.1m online fraud incidents and 2.5m cybercrime offences for the first time."

Manchester Law Society again is ahead of the game with major guidance and support available on 5th November – MLS Cyber Security Conference

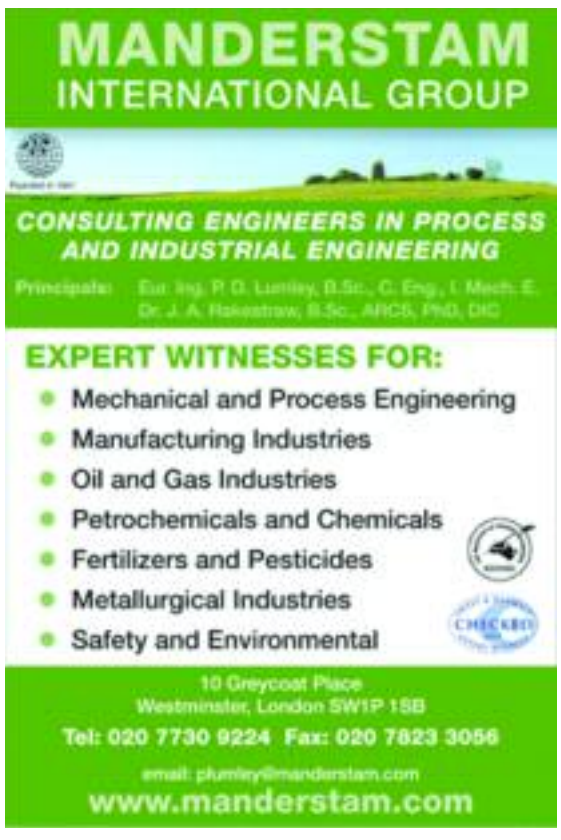
http://www.manchesterlawsociety.org.uk/event/2015/11/5/3743/

It is not just a technology answer, just like at home every member of staff of a firm has to be aware and play their part. There is an immediate need for firms to stimulate;

- A policy
- Accountability
- Education and culture
- Protection of computer systems
- Protection of telephone systems

MLS Advantage member www.xyonecybersecurity.co.uk are specialists in this field. MD Stephen Robinson (speaking at the conference)says

"We've really seen a huge increase in cyber-attacks hitting the legal sector in the past six months. As awareness and practical guidance is insufficient, we try to offer law firms the best support we can to mitigate their risks through cyber security, as losses of £750,000 plus of client money in a single breach is enough to close the doors of any firm. That's not to mention the recent impact this has had on PI insurance claims from law firms, plus the reputational damage a very simple attack could have. Because of these claims, we envisage a devastating effect on the sector as firms fail to secure cover, potentially putting them out of business."



Stephen is also the founder and chairman of the North West Cyber Security Cluster along with other industry experts such as Concert Networks, who also specialise in the professional services sector. NWCSC is a group of 20+ SMEs with skills in the cyber security sector, working together as a consortium to offer the necessary support, services and solutions to businesses who wish to prioritise cyber security before they fall victim to a breach like so many others before them.

Telephony

MD of Convert Networks www.concertnetworks.co.uk – Neil Hollands also says

"Hopefully this week's news will cause people to stop and think. Despite the prevalence of cybercrime and attacks, professional services firms have appeared reticent to take action to mitigate the associated risks despite being especially attractive to cyber criminals due to the nature of the information in their corporate network. A staggering number of firms – large and small – have neither the knowledge nor the resources to ensure that their systems, information, processes and people are protected in the face of these threats.

If this information gets into the wrong hands from a cyber-attack then it can cause irreparable damage to a firm's reputation and/or finances. Protecting this information and the infrastructure and applications that support it is becoming increasingly challenging. Hackers are ever more sophisticated while technologies such as mobile devices, telephone systems and collaborative tools create vulnerabilities that can leave businesses exposed."

MLS Advantage Member www.matrix247.com MD Steve Pritchard (speaking at the Conference) comments

"Last year Phreaking was four times greater than Credit-card fraud. Phreaking occurs when criminals target UK telephone systems from outside and use them to abuse high volumes of simultaneous calls across ALL your firms' phone lines to premium rate or overseas numbers continually until the criminal activity is detected. The average cost to UK firms who fall victim is circa £10,000 and with hacking software now freely available on the internet, this is sure to escalate even further.

" Plus 'vishing'- the act of using the telephone in an attempt to scam the user into surrendering private information that will be used for identity theft is rampant"

Computing

MLS Advantage Member www.convergets.co.uk (speaking at the conference) have recently published some strong guidance following head of marketing - Karen Gilbert's comments

'According to the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), Cyber criminals have caused "substantial losses" to 50 law firms this year, ranging from £50,000 to £2m, and a further 20 firms had fallen victim to e-mail redirection scams, involving "very substantial" amounts of money. All businesses must take email security much more seriously as this is expected to become a much bigger issue of focus in 2016 as scammers become increasingly more sophisticated'

"The vast majority of scams have been phishing emails sent to members of the public in the name of particular firms or individuals at firms and attempted to obtain bank account details or money.

There have also been warnings issued about a specific email scam targeting conveyancing firms, which invites the reader to click on links that are suspected to contain hostile and intrusive software, including viruses and other malicious programmes. The most popular virus is the Crypto Locker virus. It effectively removes files from systems, demanding payment for their return – usually in Bitcoin payment – which can't be traced back to the hacker.

As a matter of urgency, law firms should be reviewing their cybercrime prevention strategies and email security. Firms could be subject to reputational issues if clients and/or client information is affected as a result of cybercrime. They could also face reprimand by the SRA and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) with potential costs if they breach the SRA's strict Code of Conduct or the ICO's data protection rules"

To manage cybercrime risks, Converge Technology Specialists advises law firms to:

1) Put in place a risk management committee to review and manage the risks. This governing body should be connected to the board.

2) Establish ownership for data protection and information security and make it responsible for reporting to the risk committee.

3) Put in place some simple but effective data access policies and controls to systems and key data, and detail who should have access to what.

4) Understand your data. Where is your business data and your client data? Design a data strategy or, at least, start with a workable retention policy which covers both paper and electronic material.

5) Ensure password policies are implemented across the business.

6) Train staff to be aware of potential threats including bogus emails and suspicious requests for information.

7) Take advice from a specialist and review your IT security position to ensure you have a reasonable level of defences against external attacks and malware, as well as ensuring penetration tests on your systems are a regular event.

8) Use double verification (2-factor) security to access your IT system and files and limit the potential for hackers to access all parts of your IT systems and files.

9) Diarise regular penetration tests on your systems and enlist the help of ethical hackers who will be able to identify the weak spots in your IT. Implement all (or as many) of the recommendations as soon as possible.

10) Take an honest view of your capability and consider moving data and applications to a competent cloud operator. Cloud operators of substance make security a centrepiece of their proposition and commit more money to the matter than you could possibly do.

http://www.manchesterlawsociety.org.uk/event/2015/11/5/3743/

Also speaking at the conference and giving sound advice are MLS Advantage Member www.riliancetraining.com The SRA, representatives from Operation Titan and sponsors RBS

Bill Kirby is a director of Professional Choice Consultancy offering advice to firms on business issues from strategy, planning, business development, the effective use of IT applications and IT hosting for compliance, business continuity and DR. He can be contacted at billkirby@professionalchoiceconsultancy.com

MANCHESTER LAW SOCIETY MEMBERS REWARD CARD

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Please check out their profiles on Manchester Law Society website member reward card page

Don Giovanni established in 1984, is Manchester's longest serving Italian restaurant. Being adjacent to St Peter's Square in the heart of Manchester City Centre it is perfectly located for the Palace and Opera theatre, Manchester Central, Bridgewater Hall, Manchester Library and many other attractions, galleries and event spaces.

The 150 cover restaurant boasts floor to ceiling windows, modern furnishings, and a 50-seated private dining room with full AV facilities including projector and motorised screen. Be it intimate, celebratory or corporate dining, the restaurant is perfect for all occasions. In 2015 we were accredited with the Les Routiers Gold Award for exceptional standards in food and service and also The Italian Awards Winner of Most Romantic Restaurant in England.

Celebrate your Christmas in true Italian style!! From the opulent gold 12ft Christmas tree and decorations that hit you on arrival to the decadent Italian themed Christmas menus that will take you on a culinary journey, we are confident that we can give you a time to remember.

Why not start your next visit at our amazing Italian marble bar enjoying one of our signature cocktails, whilst watching the chefs create from scratch our signature dishes such as lobster and crab ravioli at our Fresh Pasta & Dessert Station before joining us in the restaurant with the menu of your choice.

To book a table please contact a member of the team via the details below.

Location: Peter House, 1-2 Oxford St, Manchester M1 5AN

Tel: 0161 228 2482

Web: www.dongiovannis.co.uk

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20% off total food bill

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- Exclusive deals and discounts for Manchester Law Society members **ONLY!!**
- Discounts of up to **66%** across some of Manchester's leading brands.
- Cards valid for up to **4 PEOPLE** in all of the restaurants in your package.
- Access offers through more than **100** individual Manchester brands.
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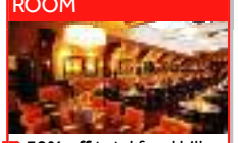

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MICHAEL CAINES FINE DINING RESTAURANT

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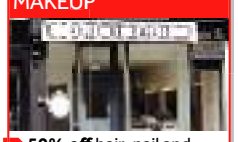

50% off hair, nail and beauty treatments

The Here and Now

ZebraLC ™ is the leading technical due diligence, audit and consulting specialist to the UK legal sector.

Zebra LC's innovation has driven a paradigm shift in the understanding of risk, value and opportunity for businesses operating within the legal industry. Delivering projects with a unique and distinct market approach, clients include leading law firms, banks, insurers, investors, funders and new market entrants.

With the swathe of changes within the sector, and the growing need for law firms, banks, insurers and funders to ascertain closer 'comfort and confidence' about the assessment of WIP value, indemnity and operational risk, ZebraLC has a unique offering. At the helm, Zebra's Managing Director, Zoe Holland, is pragmatic and commercial, using her background as a lawyer, together with management board experience, to provide an innovative business proposition.

The industry recognises that the lifeblood of legal businesses of the future is in their quality, expertise, low operational risk, financial management and healthy asset base (profitable work and highly valuable WIP). ZebraLC has identified and filled a gap in the market that is now very much in demand.

Zebra is now established, in its third year. The business has the leading edge in methodology and benchmark data owing to involvement in 'first sector' deals such as M&A by Fairpoint Group PLC. ZebraLC carried out technical and WIP due diligence in Fairpoint's acquisition of both Simpson Millar and Colemans CTTS. The latter involving a due diligence review on Colemans large volume conveyancing arm.

In early 2015, Zebra received its first international new enquiry to advise on an M&A deal in Perth, Australia and this month has been advising a US client. This year the business also achieved ISO9001 accreditation

Technology & Innovation
Founder Zoe Holland has a keen eye on technology to drive innovation in products, services and operational performance. Key KPI's were to get to a paperless audit and an online cloud based business collaboration platform by end 2014.

May 2014: Zebra Hub colloborative platform in place. This is an online and on demand service that works across all platforms including iPhone and android.

August 2014: bespoke online cloud-based audit system implemented to provide project flexibility and the ability to track risk trends during a large scale due diligence process.

2012
- Business concept established & launch of ZebraLC as a technical due diligence and management consultancy specialist.
- One employee (Founder: Zoe Holland) and cohort of 3 self employed consultants.
- Working from home office.

2013
- Focussed on personal injury consultancy & small due diligence projects for law firms.
- Reputation grows & mid year our first bank project for HSBC.
- Consultant cohort grows to 15.
- Landmark UK sector instruction from Fairpoint Group PLC in £15million deal.

2014
- Due diligence outside of personal injury sector.
- Bank projects extend to NatWest and Yorkshire Bank.
- Landmark UK deal: North Edge Capital £15m.
- Consultant cohort grows to 30.
- First outsourcing contract – clinical negligence.
- 4 employees.
- Move into small offices.

2015
- ISO 9001.
- 8 Employees & 50 Consultants – move to own premises.
- Trademark Registration.
- First project with Allianz. An industry leading approach.
- Business enquiry from Perth, Australia & US.
- International M&A Award.
- Bank project for RBS & 3 major PLCs.

Zoe Holland

ZebraLC was launched in 2012, with Zoe at the helm and 3 self -employed consultants. The business has grown into a nationally recognized business known for entrepreneurship, innovation, technical brilliance, professionalism and absolute integrity and discretion.

What started as an initial kernel of an idea, has snowballed into an offering that the sector recognises as an essential ingredient in the profiling of risk, value and opportunity in legal businesses.

Hailing from Nottingam, Zoe moved to Manchester to study politics and history at Manchester University and planned to become a journalist. However her parents convinced her that the law would be an excellent career.

Zoe trained with clinical negligence specialists Alexander Harris and later moved to trade union specialists Jack Thornley and Partner. She then returned to Alexander Harris as the Head of the Clinical Negligence team which then went on to merge with national law firm Irwin Mitchell.

However, Zoe came out of law firm private practice following the diagnosis of her daughter's serious medical condition. Partnership in a law firm did not lend itself to flexibility. She entered the world of legal consultancy to enable work/life flexibility. This was the most rewarding decision she ever made as it opened a world of opportunity and a 'blank book' giving her the ability to think creatively.

Zoe says that working as a consultant with a number of law firms, gaining experience on the Board of LawNet and a short spell as a partner in a PI consulting law firm gave the confidence to launch ZebraLC in December 2012. Initially ZebraLC concentrated in PI and Clinical Negligence firms but has now carried out due diligence and audit on areas such as commercial property, conveyancing, private client, child abuse, family and serious fraud. Project areas include assessment of technical capability, WIP valuation, indemnity risk, quality, operational and financial performance.

Zoe says that the turning point for ZebraLC was the successful completion of two landmark deals; the Fairpoint PLC £15 million acquisition of Simpson Millar North Edge £15 million private equity investment in industrial disease firm Roberts Jackson.

In just three short years ZebraLC has expanded, moving from the Zoe's kitchen to The Old Coach House in Sale.

By mid 2014, ZebraLC's greatest challenge was to cascade the knowledge and vision from herself as Founder & Managing Director, to a corporate structure and employed team to share the journey and take the business to new levels.

In 2014, HR specialist Karen Flavell joined ZebraLC and joined the management Board in 2015. Karen has an extensive career within the banking sector over a 18 year period. Karen's role is to bring together and oversee Zebra's biggest asset – people. With a diverse network of technical experts, Karen has been integral in aligning the collaborative cohort to the vision, mission and values.

Hazel Ryan, former Eversheds Risk Director joined ZebraLC in 2013 and is now Risk & Operations Director. Zoe says that Hazel was instrumental in preparing the business for the ISO 9001, the quality management standard.

As the business has expanded, so have the accolades. Zoe has been named "Outstanding Innovator of the Year' at the Claims Innovation Awards, and Legal Entrepreneur of the Year at the Modern Law Awards. This year she is a Finalists in both the Great British Entrepreneur Awards and Lloyds Bank National Business Awards 2015.

Vicki Acres

Vicki joined ZebraLC at its inception in 2012, initially as a consultant, and then in 2014 became one of the first employees to work alongside Zoe Holland, Founder of the business.

Surrey born and bred, Vicki studied law at Exeter University and on graduation worked in the insurance industry before embarking on the LPC in Manchester. Vicki joined Surrey firm Howell Jones and Partners as a Trainee Solicitor and says that one of the most important lesson she learned in her career was on her very first day and that was " recognising the value and importance of time and WIP."

Once qualified Vicki moved to Alexander Harris, where she met Zoe and spent seven years working on complex and high value cerebral palsy claims. Vicki then had twin sons and says "I discovered that life would never be the same again!". Returning to work, Vicki worked for a short time at Pannone followed by three years at Poole Alcock before joining Macclesfield firm Jobling Gowler as a clinical negligence specialist on a part-time basis, her other role at that time was that of Deputy Registrar of Marriages, and she officiated at hundreds of marriages, including those of footballers, local politicians and celebrities.

Vicki has led on a number of ZebraLC's specialist & major due diligence projects as well as undertaking a number of key client consulting projects. Vicki also recruits and co-ordinates ZebraLCs team of technical experts and maintains the ISO documentation and organises staff and the extensive consultant cohort training.

Vicki's role now also includes heading up the newly launched ZebraTD - the technical development and outsourcing arm of ZebraLC and acts as Chair of the Technical Advisory Board.

Vicki continues to work part time, despite her twin boys now being 15 and says that one of the reasons that she relishes her role is that it is important to maintain the work/life balance and ZebraLC offers flexibility and a good quality of life for everyone within the business.

ZebraTD™ is a personal injury focussed business offshoot of ZebraLC™. It brings a sector first: an online and on demand knowledge share, and risk outsourcing service in complex areas such as clinical negligence, industrial disease and serious injury.

Why a business offshoot?
Whilst ZebraLC™ has technical coverage in all areas of legal service, a number of the business' major M&A, law firm diagnostic and bank funding projects have been within the personal injury sector. This provides a unique insight into the risk, value and opportunity in legal businesses operating within this specialist sector.

For injury litigation of the future, ZebraTD supports legal businesses in the successful delivery of profitable, efficient and risk aware personal injury legal services. The offshoot is supported by a national cohort of experienced technical and commercially focussed injury experts with a proven track record. All technical experts are trained under Zebra's core methodology and individually selected.

The team works in a collaborative buddy system – sharing knowledge and enabling 'best of breed' technical development.

White labelled risk outsourcing
ZebraTD™ offers a 'white labelled' outsourcing service in complex litigation areas such as industrial disease, clinical negligence and serious injury. Experienced experts form an unrivalled outsourcing team. Already proven as 'excellent' in an existing large volume clinical negligence contract, the team where required, can work remotely via a law firm's Proclaim system.

"Specialised injury cases such as clinical negligence and industrial disease carry an inherently higher risk to the business than other types of litigation. A detailed and formal assessment of risk at the outset is paramount to make a decision as to whether or not to accept a case, and if so, on what terms. In these specialised cases a dynamic approach to risk assessment is required with on-going continuous risk assessment or a formalised process of risk assessment at key stages.

We offer a truly unique and bespoke risk assessment service to law firms, insurers and any business with an interest in identifying and managing risk in these specialised cases. Supported by its Technical Advisory Board, ZebraTD has access to an unparalleled resource in terms of industry leading technical specialists in the fields of clinical negligence, industrial disease, personal injury and costs. "
Vicki Acres, Head of Technical and Risk Outsourcing

Technical development
Zebra's expertise in due diligence provides us with invaluable risk management, business improvement and valuation profiling data. This sets the background for us to offer clients a different perspective in training and technical development under the umbrella of ZebraTD™

Our approach is to concentrate on improving technical excellence, productivity, efficiency and fee earning capability to increase profit.

Example specifics
• Clinical negligence risk outsourcing for one of the UKs leading clinical negligence firms
• Implementation & training of injury focused assessment & sifting of multi-track personal injury cases
• Risk management training surrounding potential brain injury cases
• Guidance on training around risk assessments and case selection within complex areas such as industrial disease and clinical negligence
• Sharing data with NatWest on risk & valuation profiling of clinical negligence caseloads
• Risk delegation for a leading ATE insurer for bespoke areas including industrial disease & clinical negligence

PI Knowledge Hub

Zebra's knowledge platform provides a totally unique offering to the personal injury sector. All clients are invited into our specialist Knowledge Hub.This is a bespoke collaboration platform to enable clients to have multi interface access to our team of specialists. Whether via a webrowser, tablet, iPad, iPhone or Android, clients can collaborate, knowledge share and support each other with instant interaction. In a rapidly changing legal sector, our Knowledge Hub is a significant value-add to clients.

"We have an unrivalled team of technical experts within the team. Clients have the benefit of sharing experience, seeking advice and having support from industry leaders. Our collaborative Knowledge Hub is a unique way of offering clients a value added platform. Delivering knowledge share via innovative technology has been a key driver in establishing ZebraTD." Zoe Holland, Managing Director, Zoe Holland

Technical Advisory Board

The Vision
Zebra is an innovative, young entrepreneurial business. In keeping with that spirit, Founder Zoe Holland had the vision to bring together industry technical experts to support the business in a high-level advisory capacity through a Technical Advisory Board.This is an exciting development for the business, leading to the inaugural meeting of the Board on 29th October 2015. With a host of leading names including Dominic Regan, Andrew Twambley and Terry Lee, this was a fantastic opportunity to debate hot topic industry issues.

The Technical Advisory Board provide non-binding strategic direction and advice around technical legal developments and injury sector trends to both ZebraLC and the personal injury arm ZebraTD. The Board are not involved in any project or client delivery, but sit as a thought leadership structure.

Composed of carefully selected accomplished technical legal and industry experts offering technical skills, market knowledge and specialist insight such as trends in new CFAs, fixed fees for clinical negligence, indemnity risk trends, regulatory issues specific to the injury sector, impact of the political landscape, case law development and guidance on what constitutes quality legal service.

The Board is chaired by Zebra's Head of Technical and Risk Outsourcing, Vicki Acres and will be delivering quarterly industry thought leadership to Zebra, its clients and the wider sector.

www.zebratd.co.uk @zebra_td www.zebralc.co.uk @zebralc
0161 635 0213

Technical Advisory Board

Dominic Regan
"The most knowledgeable person in the country on Part 36," - **Costs Judge Campbell**
"The leading expert in the field of civil procedure and adviser to the top judiciary on law reform'-**His Honour Judge Simon Brown QC."**
Dominic is a Solicitor, visiting Professor at City Law School, London and a legal broadcaster and writer. He is a peer reviewer for Oxford University Press. Dominic has acted as special advisor to Lord Justice Sir Rupert Jackson in respect of the UK legal civil costs reforms and has worked closely with HH Judge Simon Brown QC who pioneered active case/costs management.

Tracey Graham
Tracey comes "highly recommended" in Legal 500 and is described in Chambers & Partners as being, "..well known for her experience with industrial disease claims. She frequently handles cases relating to noise-induced hearing loss, occupational stress and cancers, and asbestos exposure".Tracey is a Solicitor with over 20 years' experience specialising in Occupational accident and Disease and Personal Injury. She is a member of the Law Society's Specialist Personal Injury Accreditation Scheme and the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers. Tracey provides seminars, writes articles, blogs and tweets on health & safety issues. She believes that that education and training in the workplace ensures that employees have access to the best advice at the point they need it.

Chris Fry
Chris is a Solicitor with over 15 years' experience and Founder of niche practice, Unity Law specialising in Occupational Illness and Equality Act Claims. Chris and his firm have won numerous awards for their ground-breaking work in bringing individual and group action discrimination claims on behalf of disadvantaged Claimants. He has a national reputation as an expert in Noise Induced Hearing Loss, having acted as lead solicitor representing claimants in a case heard by the Supreme Court.Chris is a Fellow of APIL and has co-authored APIL's Personal Injury, Law Practice & Precedents and APIL's Guide to Occupational Illness Claims. Chris is editor and author of the APIL Guide to Noise Claims. Chris works with Zebra as a specialist technical consultant in relation to industrial disease claims.

Terry Lee
Terry is a nationally recognised Solicitor with over 30 years' experience specialising in Clinical Negligence and serious Personal Injury Claims. He was involved in groundbreaking case law decisions including Joyce -v-Wandsworth Health Authority, the case that provided clarification of the judicial approach to causation in clinical negligence cases. As a Senior Fellow of APIL, he is co-author of APIL's Guide to Catastrophic Injury Claims and a past contributor to APIL's Personal Injury Law Practice and Precedents.Terry works with ZebraLC as a specialist consultant for clinical negligence and catastrophic personal injury.

Kevin Latham
Kevin is a Barrister specialising in personal injury litigation, costs and funding. Before being called to the Bar Kevin gained significant experience of costs working both for a firm of external costs draftsmen and in-house for a firm of Solicitors. As a specialist Costs Counsel Kevin has been at the forefront of costs challenges facing the personal injury sector. Kevin's personal injury practice covers both Claimant and Defendant Fast Track and Multi Track personal injury work. He has a particular interest in cases involving allegations of fraud.Kevin has provided specialist costs auditing and costs advice on a number of ZebraLC's highest profile due diligence audits.

Claire Green
Claire is a current member of the Hutton steering committee developing the format for the new Bill of Costs, which is testimony to her recognition within the industry as a leading costs expert. She has a specialist costs consultant role at ZebraLC.A Costs Lawyer with over 20 years' experience in costs, she previously held the Council post of Chairman of Education before being appointed to her current post for the Association of Costs Lawyers as Policy and Development Officer.Claire is accredited as a Civil & Commercial Mediator by the London School of Mediation.

Andrew Twambley
Andrew received the well-deserved 'Lifetime Achievement Award' at the Claims Innovation Awards (2013). He is one of the personal injury industry's most well known personalities.A Solicitor with over 30 years' experience, he is the Founder of Amelans and Director of the UK's leading Solicitors' marketing consortium, IL4U. Andrew writes a regular column for Claims Magazine and regularly speaks at conferences and seminars.

Cathie Delaney
Cathie is a leading clinical negligence Solicitor with 20 years' experience. She joined ZebraLC as a specialist consultant within both the due diligence and risk outsourcing team. She is a member of the Law Society's specialist Clinical Negligence Accreditation Scheme and an APIL Senior Litigator. She is an accredited Mediator and has previously acted as Panel Solicitor for the Erbs Palsy Group UK. Cathie also holds qualifications in critical care nursing, midwifery, teaching and human sciences. She is a Visiting Fellow at Nottingham Trent University Law School and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine.

MTSG News

Full Steam Ahead!
Well, we're well and truly into the swing of things now! After the roaring success of the Launch Party, the FELT Launch and our October Halloween Social all went down in a similarly splendid fashion! This is turning out to be a particularly ambitious year for MTSG and I've every confidence the excellent and incredibly hard-working committee will deliver nothing but excellence. We've got a **Ski Trip** coming up, our **Winter Ball** and we're even hosting the inaugural **Inter-JLD Sports Trophy** competing against a number of Junior Lawyer Division groups in various sports (and of course, MTSG which is proudly and perhaps uniquely independent).

Winter Ball
The event we have all been waiting for - MTSG's Winter Ball to kick off the season of debauchery and goodwill. The Ball will be held this year at the **Museum of Science and Industry** on **26 November 2015**. Invites for the event will now have already been circulated. Provided we've not already sold out by the time this article goes to print, you had better move quickly to secure your places!

MTSG Ski Trip – Les Arcs, France
From 30 January to 6 February 2016, MTSG members, family and friends will be heading to the slopes of Les Arcs, France for skiing, snowboarding, après-ski and merriment! The deadline for registering and deposit paying was 30 October 2015. However, please let us know if you fancy coming along as we will beg our tour provider to include you (admittedly, we've no idea whether this will be possible or not). The price is £629 and for that, our skiers will be enjoying:

- Return flights from Manchester
- Return transfers to resort
- 7 nights ski in/ski out accommodation with free use of indoor pool, sauna / steam room and Jacuzzi!
- 6 day Les Arcs lift pass and a social programme for the week
- Extras including ski hire, lessons and a lift pass up grade which can all be purchased at a very reason able cost.

In the event that the deadline isn't as firm as we have been led to believe, you can register for the trip and make payments through the "Off the Piste" website - http://booking.offthepiste.com/groupname/mtsgjanuarytrip2016
If you have any questions, please email our Activities Director – gemma.porter@shoosmiths.co.uk

Inter-JLD Sports Trophy
Although the name is something of a working title, Sports Directors Shalina Bhatia, Ryan Brown and Kris Scales are in the process of organising a huge sporting event for the MTSG and similar organisations in the North of England. We will have 100+ participants from various trainee solicitor groups and Junior Lawyer Division groups all competing in Manchester in Spring 2016. Watch this space for further details over the coming months…If you have any contacts or suggestions that may assist in the organisation of this event, please contact Kris.Scales@slaterheelis.co.uk.

Education
Our extremely hard-working Education Directors Joe Ailion and Rachel Forbes have launched into an extremely interesting and useful programme of career-enhancing opportunities for MTSG members. October saw members attend a Pro Bono & Employability Fair and a careers presentation at Manchester Metropolitan University and a Humanities Law School seminar at the University of Manchester. We will be attending a Q&A Panel in November at BPP. We've been inundated with volunteers and at the moment are fully-booked for these events but please check our Twitter, website and regular MTSG update emails for details of other opportunities coming your way which you can use to develop extra-curricular skills and enhance your CV!

Charity
MTSG's charity fundraising got off to a tasty start with our decision to combine our Halloween Social with a bake sale at our Halloween Social; Cake and free drinks – what's not to like! We will be raffling off some fabulous prizes at our annual Winter Ball on 26 November. We have a number of other fundraising events planned throughout the year, including a 24-hour cycle-a-thon and completing the Yorkshire Three Peaks in the new year. We're really excited about supporting our chosen charities and we know we can count on the always excellent support of our members to support the very-deserving, Forever Manchester and British Heart Foundation.
If you've any queries about getting involved just let me or the other MTSG committee members know!

Martin Bloor,
MTSG Chairman
Martin.Bloor@Brabners.com

MYSG News

Following the resounding success of the MYSG's Newly Qualified Event last month, November will bring some calm and relaxation before the Christmas rush. This month we are holding a spa event in conjunction with the Manchester Young Chartered Accountants Group at the Midland Hotel Spa. Attendees will enjoy prosecco on arrival with complimentary spa treatments, and a goody bag to take home. We definitely expect this event to be a sell out and what a wonderful way to make a new contact!

We have spent some time over the last couple of months developing the committee and we would like to welcome our newest members to our board; Briana Scally from Irwin Mitchell, Megan Grace Christie from Linder Myers and Lida Khanverdi from Shoosmiths. We have a fantastic representation of Manchester's finest law firms currently on the MYSG board which we hope should encourage more engagement with the young Lawyers in the city.

This month we would like to shine a spot light on our fantastic treasurer Jacqui Bourke, a commercial property solicitor at Linder Myers. Jacqui has worked tirelessly to ensure that the MYSG accounts are in order and all monies accounted for. She also organised the Autumn Newly Qualified event which was attended by over 70 solicitors and truly welcomed the NQ's into qualified life. Jacqui works equally as hard in her role at Linder Myers and her work includes all aspects of commercial property, landlord and tenant, refinancing of property portfolios and aspects related to development. A true asset to any organisation and we are lucky to have her.

If you are interested or know anyone at your firm who is looking to develop their network and business development skills please sign up to our mailing list at https://www.mysg.co.uk and follow us on LinkedIn and Facebook.

Charlotte Brinsley
Chair of Manchester Young Solicitors Group
Family Solicitor at Slater and Gordon Lawyers
Charlotte.brinsley@slatergordon.co.uk

Until next month!

Charlotte Brinsley
Chair of Manchester Young Solicitors Group
Family Solicitor at Slater and Gordon Lawyers
Charlotte.brinsley@slatergordon.co.uk

CILEX News

CILEx Greater Manchester Branch

The branch is running a full calendar of events during 2015 and the following events are currently scheduled:

CPD Events
20th October 2015 - Professionalism Event (Creative Problem Solving)
22nd October 2015 - Interview Techniques (with Sacco Mann)
29th October 2015 - CPD Event
12th November 2015 - Update regarding the employment market in Greater Manchester (with Sacco Mann)
26th November 2015 -Topic TBC (Park Square Chambers)

Unless otherwise stated all CPD events take place at 6pm at the offices of Weightmans LLP, 3 Piccadilly Place, Manchester, M1 3BN and are open to both members and non-members.

If you would like further details of any of these events and/or you if have any requests or suggestions for CPD topics you'd like to see covered please contact the branch at: manchestercilex@outlook.com

Social events
3rd December 2015 -Christmas social event (venue TBC)

Branch Committee
With the end of the year fast approaching it will soon be time for the branch AGM early in the New Year. This meeting is where the branch Chairperson and committee for the coming year is decided upon so if you would like to get involved in the running of the branch and help raise the profile of CILEx in the Greater Manchester region please keep an eye out in future editions for the date of the AGM. Fresh blood and new ideas are always welcome so please do come and join us!

The Chartered Institute of Legal Executives

CILEx Regulation welcomes new chair

Sam Younger CBE (pictured) has been appointed Chair of CILEx Regulation, the independent regulator of Chartered Legal Executive lawyers, members of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEx) and specialist lawyers authorised for independent practice.

Sam will oversee the work of CILEx Regulation as it expands regulation of specialist legal businesses and legal professionals authorised for the new suite of independent practice rights in the full range of legal services. He will officially take up his post as Chair of the CILEx Regulation Board on 1 November 2015.

Sam said: "It is an exciting time to be joining CILEx Regulation, as the legal services market continues to open up and provide real opportunities for growth. I very much look forward to working with the Board and with the Chief Executive Officer and her staff, to build on the strong platform already built and to position the organisation at the leading edge of excellence and innovation in the regulation of legal services."

CILEx Regulation Chief Executive Officer, Helen Whiteman, welcomed Sam's appointment, saying: "I am thrilled Sam will be joining CILEx Regulation and I greatly look forward to working with him in his new role and supporting him in leading the Board. The regulatory landscape has been changing fast in recent years and CILEx members have been at the forefront of outcomes-focused regulation and a fresh approach to CPD. Many more changes are to come, and I have no doubt that CILEx members, non-members and authorised entities, as well as CILEx Regulation itself, will benefit from Sam's experience and expertise."

CILEx Regional Contact

If you would like any further information about CILEx please contact Chris Hoskin, CILEx' Development Officer for The North of England:

Phone: 07881 286267
Email: choskin@cilex.org.uk

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Greater Manchester CILEx host presentation by the Sophie Lancaster Foundation

The Greater Manchester CILEx Branch hosted a presentation by the Sophie Lancaster Foundation. The Sophie Lancaster Foundation was formed following the horrific murder of Sophie Lancaster.

Sophie was tragically murdered in 2007. Sophie, along with her boyfriend, Robert, was attacked by a number of males in their mid-teens while walking through Stubbylee Park. As a result of her severe head injuries she went into a coma never regained consciousness, and died thirteen days later. The police said the attack may have been linked to the couple wearing gothic fashion and being members of the goth subculture. Five teenage boys were later arrested and charged with murder.

Sophie's family wanted to ensure a lasting legacy to their beautiful, bright creative daughter and so The Sophie Lancaster Foundation was established. It became a registered charity in 2009.

The aims and objectives of the Charity are as follows:

• To create a lasting legacy to Sophie.

• To provide educational group-works that will challenge the prejudice and intolerance towards people from alternative subcultures.

• To campaign to have the UK Hate Crime legislation extended to include people from alternative subcultures or Lifestyle and Dress.

Sophie's mother, Sylvia Lancaster spoke of the death of her daughter and her experiences with the legal system. This was a heart warming and thought provoking event. It expressed diversity and acceptance in a non-conventional manner.

It was both sad and hearth warming to listen to the Sylvia's story and everyone who attended the event was touched and inspired by Sylvia's words.

If you would like to find out further information regarding the charity, please go to their website http://www.sophielancasterfoundation.com/

The BBC has made a programme about Sophie and Sylvia's experienced which was aired on BBC4 at 10.30pm on Sunday 11 October.

If you would like to join the Greater Manchester Branch, please contact the Chair Rachel Stevens at manchestercilex@outlook.com

Elizabeth Naylor, Martine Delaney, Sylvia Lancaster, Rachel Stevens, Saada Ali and Alan Eyres.

Local event raises over £500 for BASIC (the Brain and Spinal Injury Centre)

Serious injury specialists CFG Law held a 'Ladies Night Off' event for those working in serious injury as a charity fundraiser for BASIC, the Brain and Spinal Injury Centre based in Salford.

The event at CFG Law's Cheadle based offices welcomed over 50 ladies who work closely with seriously injured people, to enjoy an evening of informal networking and some well-deserved treats.

Most importantly, CFG Law had invited ladies to gather together to raise vital funds for BASIC (the Brain and Spinal Injury Centre) holding a charity raffle in their aid. BASIC offer patients who have suffered serious head and spinal injuries expert support and rehabilitation, helping them to regain independence and improve their quality of life.

Wendy Edge, CEO of BASIC who attended the event said, "A big thank you to CFG Law for hosting a lovely sociable evening. We are delighted with the donation raised through the raffle which will go towards supporting those recovering from brain and spinal injury in the local area"

Sabrina McCarron, a serious injury solicitor at CFG Law commented, "We were delighted with the turnout for the event. It was a fantastic opportunity for us to raise funds for a fantastic charity and meet up with colleagues working in serious injury. As a firm, we are keen to build links with like-minded professionals who embrace our ethos of putting clients' needs at the heart of everything we do."

Kings Chambers raises £6,685 for Diane Modahl Sports Foundation

Barristers at Manchester-based Kings Chambers helped raise £6,685 for a local charity during its annual golf day at Mottram Hall in Cheshire.

The Diane Modahl Sports Foundation (DMSF) provides opportunities for young people from disadvantaged areas in the region to participate in sport. It works with able-bodied and disabled young people, bringing in top coaches and mentors to help them achieve their potential.
On the day, Steven Abbot Associates LLP won the team challenge and Hedley Manton won the individual competition. Sponsors included Blue Coffee Networks, CLB Coopers, Frenkel Topping, Oyez and RMS PR.

Colin Griffin, Chief Clerk at Kings Chambers, said:"We're delighted to support the Diane Modahl Sports Foundation for the second year running and we're proud of our team, clients and sponsors who have helped to foster aspiration and help young local people succeed by opening up opportunities through sport."

Diane Modahl said:"I'd like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone involved in the Kings Chambers charity golf day for DMSF. The turnout was fantastic and the golf even better! Everyone involved had a wonderful time and the funds raised are superb.

"The monies donated will enable our charity to work with more schools, community groups and young people across Greater Manchester. We provide an opportunity for them to raise their aspirations and fulfil their potential in sport, school and life. We appreciate all the support and generous contributions from everyone involved."

DMSF was founded in 2010 by Manchester-based Diane Modahl, one of Britain's most successful 800m runners. She won a Gold Medal in the 1990 Commonwealth Games, and followed this up with a further Silver and Bronze Medal. She has also competed in 4 Olympic Games, 1988 in Seoul, 1992 in Barcelona, 1996 in Atlanta and 2000 in Sydney.
See www.dmsf.co.uk

Rory Davis, Colin Griffin, Diane Modahl, Paul Clarke and Harry Young

Express Solicitors raises £1,056 for NWLST

On Thursday 1st October 2015, a team of 16 Express volunteers took part in the Manchester Legal walk to raise money for the North West Legal Support Trust.

The North West Legal Support Trust (NWLST) aims to improve access to justice for the most vulnerable in society and they do this by raising funds and distributing them to organisations that support those who need legal help but cannot afford it. The need for free legal advice centres has grown in the past few years, yet funding for the legal advice centres themselves has reduced. The organisations supported by NWLST; prevent families from being made homeless, prevent destitution, help older people gain the support they're entitled, and help women and children who have been trafficked for domestic servitude and prostitution.

The Manchester Legal walk helps to raise vital funds for the NWLST and the Express Solicitors team alone managed to raise an impressive £1,056!

The 10k course took the Express team around 2 hours to complete and they all enjoyed a well-deserved free drink at the finish line.

Save the date for the glamorous North West ChildLine Ball 2016, celebrating 30 years of the ChildLine service

Date: Saturday 5 March 2016
Venue: The Hilton Hotel, Deansgate, Manchester, M50 2ZY
Time: 7pm - late
Tickets: £150 per person and tables of 10 and 12 are available

Thank you to everyone who supported our ChildLine Ball in 2015.

The Havana Nights themed evening was a resounding success, raising an unbelievable £221,000 for the NSPCC's ChildLine Schools Service in the North West.

Following on from this success, we are delighted to announce the date for the 2016 ball. Save the date and join us on Saturday 5 March 2016 for another spectacular event to help us celebrate ChildLine's 30th anniversary.

Guests will enjoy a wonderful evening, including a drinks reception, fine dining, plus live music and entertainment. There will be some magnificent prizes up for grabs in the ever-popular Chocolate Box tombola, as well as the chance to bid on some amazing auction items in a live and silent auction.

Sponsorship opportunities are also available to promote your company at the event and through acknowledged donations in our souvenir programme.

Register your interest in the 2016 ChildLine Ball now by emailing northwestappeals@nspcc.org.uk or telephone the NSPCC fundraising team on 0161 393 4474

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Ethos Forensics offer independent forensic consultancy and expert witness services. We specialise in body fluids evidence including blood pattern analysis, DNA profiling interpretation including mixtures and Low Template DNA techniques, textile damage assessment, sexual offences casework, cold case reviews and quality systems in forensic science. Ethos Forensics provide the following services:

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Docutech Office Solutions win European Corporate Excellence Award

MLS Advantage Members, Docutech Office Solutions are delighted to announce our recent recognition from the European Corporate Excellence Awards 2105 – Best for Managed Print Services

This award returns the value and hard work shown by Docutech Office Solutions and its staff over the past few years. While our industry keeps evolving and our customers' needs are ever changing this award recognises how Docutech Office Solutions approach and work with its customers to implement and managed the best platform for productivity and cost effective operations with their organisations. Docutech Office Solutions are committed to applying the very best processes and strategic approach with its clients and this aligned with its CSR partnership, Docutech are ready.

The European Corporate Awards have been put in place to reward those whose industry-leading expertise, sector leading results and tireless commitment to world beating customer service have seen them surge to the front of the UK and European pack.

The dedicated awards team undertake a huge amount of research, leaving no stone unturned to ensure that these awards are only allocated to the professionals that truly deserve them. The awards are based 100% on merit and are a reflection of those in European business arena.

AlphaBiolabs becomes fastest testing lab in UK

AlphaBiolabs, the DNA, drug and alcohol testing specialist, has become the first to deliver next day test results as standard practice for all legal DNA cases.

Only previously a service offered for so called 'peace of mind' cases, the Warrington-based laboratory has from this week become the first company to offer this service for its legal cases, without any additional costs attached.

The reassurance of speed alongside the industry ISO 17025 accreditation and strict procedures to maintain chain of custody, means the service and results are accepted by family law courts, The Ministry of Justice, UK Borders Agency and The Child Support Agency.

Together with the benefits to members of the public, solicitors and social workers, the push for providing the fastest testing has also been partly due to the company's close working relationship with The Jeremy Kyle Show. AlphaBiolabs exclusively provide all the show's DNA testing, which require urgent results for each case.

David Thomas, Managing Director at AlphaBiolabs, explained: "We understand that with the nature of our service that time is such an important factor. The results we provide can be life changing and we appreciate it can be a sensitive and worrying time.

"We have pushed the boundaries and are delighted to be providing next day results for all legal DNA cases to help reduce any unnecessary angst when anticipating all-important results, making the whole process more effective and efficient."

AlphaBiolabs carry out all its DNA, drug and alcohol testing and analyses at its own laboratory, eliminating the need for external partners.

AlphaBiolabs has recently expanded its workforce and invested in state of the art testing equipment. In addition, AlphaBiolabs has developed a network of walk-in centres in locations across the UK with centres already in place in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Preston and Birmingham, to provide convenience for sample collection.

Thomas added: "With our peace of mind home kits available at Home Bargains stores, our competitively priced legal testing and our walk-in centres providing free sample collection, DNA testing is more affordable to families and clients than ever before.

"When combined with next day results and processes that uses the latest technology, we pride ourselves in offering the fastest and most affordable testing available, ensuring answers are provided quickly and accurately at a time when they are needed most."

A little bit of history

Statue of James Watt in Paiccadilly Gardens

James Watt was a scottish inventor and mechanical engineer who invented the Watt steam engine which led the way for the industrical revolution. The statue of James Watt in Manchester is a an acknowldgement to him and his inventions which enabled Manchester to become one of the first manufacuring cities in the world, and why it became known "Cottonopolis."

This statue of Watt is a bronze copy of the marble one that stands in Westminster Abbey. The original statue was sculpted by Sir Francis Chantrey and cost £6000 in 1925. He has dividers in his right hand taking measurements from a drawing of a steam engine on his lap.

William Theed made the copy of the original statue and it was then cast in bronze by Robinson and Cottam of Pimlico in London and was initially erected outside the Manchester Infirmary in 1857. The Infirmary was demolished in 1909 and the Gardens was installed.

The statue is It is 2.1 metres high on a 2.4 metre high stone pedestal and cost less than £1000, a sixth of the cost of the original.

Watt also developed the concept of horsepower and the SI unit of power, the watt, was named after him.

Leveraging your email list

Every business has an email list – from a small number of valued customers, to a huge database of contacts scattered across the funnel.

But are you leveraging yours effectively?

Email marketing has obvious benefits, especially if your email list includes contacts who are yet to become clients. But it has come on in leaps and bounds in recent years – sending a blanket sales message to all your contacts is unlikely to achieve much.

It's much more effective to segment your list, by position in the funnel and which service area they showed an interest in, and send them useful, tailored content.

Don't just sell – engage. Send them relevant advice content, updates on legislation, invitations to your events, or even offers for consultations if they're in that final stage of consideration. Segmenting your list helps you say the right thing at the right time, which is especially important in industries like law where the conversion journey can be long, and where there could be opportunities for repeat business.

Ad innovations

Both Facebook and Twitter offer advertising formats which leverage email lists. To increase engagement with people already aware of you, you can upload your email list and show these individuals ads next time they're on social media. And here's where it gets really exciting – you can also create 'lookalike audiences', i.e. target completely new individuals who have similar traits and interests to your existing email contacts.
And the next big step – announced in September 2015 – is Customer Match. This new tool from Google allows you to upload an email list into AdWords, so you can target your PPC ads in search results to these individuals, target similar individuals, or exclude these individuals from your targeting to only reach new customers. The potential is simply huge.

Adding more addresses

If your email list needs growing – beyond those you collect via onsite enquiry forms – the best approach is to make yourself useful. Give them a compelling reason to share this increasingly valuable personal detail – whether it's a newsletter full of great content, an offline event, or a one-off knowledge share such as an e-book or webinar (Twitter even offers an advertising format where users can enter their email address in return for access to content like this).

Whatever you do, aim for quality over quantity in your email list; and to get quality, you'll need to offer quality.

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Manchester Literature Festival

Sponsored by HSBC

Manchester Literature Festival (MLF) was launched in 2006 and was built on the legacy of its successful predecessor, Manchester Poetry Festival. MLF provides unique and imaginative opportunities for audiences to experience high quality live literature via an annual festival format and associated project activities.

Afternoon Delight at the Manchester Literature Festival

For the fourth year running, the Manchester office of global law firm Squire Patton Boggs sponsored an Afternoon Tea event as part of the Manchester Literature Festival. As in previous years, this indulgent affair was held at the iconic Midland Hotel.

Hosted by Carol Ackroyd, the afternoon provided an opportunity to mingle with around 150 guests, made up of general members of the public, Squire Patton Boggs lawyers and clients, as well as principal sponsor of the Festival, HSBC.

This year's special guest was Deborah Moggach – the author of several bestselling books including Tulip Fever, The Ex-Wives, Heartbreak Hotel, Stolen and – perhaps her most well-known – The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, which is now also a feature film. After a brief introduction, Deborah talked about her new book Something to Hide, which follows the fortunes of five characters scattered across the globe from Pimlico to West Africa. After an absorbing reading from this latest novel, Deborah proceeded with an entertaining Q&A session and book signing.

Following the main attraction, all that remained was to sit down for a delightful afternoon tea featuring banana bread and, of course, scones, jam and clotted cream.

Reflecting on the event, Senior Associate Helen Hoath noted "As in previous years, this has been a really enjoyable afternoon. It's nice for us to sponsor something that's a little different to 'standard' networking opportunities; and it's great to be actively involved in and to support a worthwhile long-term project such as the Manchester Literature Festival, which is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year."

Lawyers Susan Kelly, Sian Taylor, Clare Shepherd, Charmian Johnson and Helen Hoath (all pictured with Deborah Moggach) attended on behalf of Squire Patton Boggs.

SQUIRE PATTON BOGGS

Melvyn Bragg discusses his new novel at Manchester Cathedral

Veteran broadcaster, author and parliamentarian Lord Melvyn Bragg visited Manchester last month as part of the Manchester Literary Festival. Lord Bragg has recently published his historical novel "Now is the Time" set against the backdrop of the Peasants Revolt in 1381.

Melvyn Bragg was born in Wigton, Cumbria, the son of a mechanic, but was encouraged to attend grammar school and went on to study modern history at Wadham College, Oxford.

He joined the BBC in 1961 as a trainee and spent his first two years in radio at the BBC World Service, then at the BBC Third Programme and BBC Home Service.

He also presented the BBC books programme 'Read All About It ' and 'The Lively Arts.' However he is best known for the LWT's arts programme 'The South Bank Show', which he edited and presented from 1978 to 2010. The programme then moved to Sky Arts.

Bragg published his first novel in 1965, and has written a number of television and film screenplays.

"Now is the Time" is set in 1381 and Bragg said that the Peasant's Revolt was the biggest ever rebellion in England. He added though that the term "Peasants" which historically has been used to describe the rebellion was incorrect as there were no peasants in England at the time, but rather serfs.

The rebellion came at a time following the great plague, which had decimated the population by 50% and 300 years of oppression by the Norman barons.

The catalyst for the rebellion was the introduction of the Poll Tax, which taxed the individual, rather than the household and many could not or would not pay. When a royal official, John Bampton attempted to collect unpaid taxes in Brentwood, Essex ended in violence, the rebellion escalated and spread across the whole of the South East.

Inspired by the cleric John Ball, and led by Wat Tyler, the rebellion grew and hordes of rebels, armed with pitchforks and homemade weapons marched on London. On 13 June, the rebels entered London and attacked the gaols, destroyed the Savoy Palace, set fire to law books and buildings in the Temple, and killed anyone associated with the royal government.

King Richard II, the boy King agreed to some of the demands of the rebels including the abolition of serfdom. However, just days later at meeting between the rebels and the King, Wat Tyler was killed creating further violence. By this time the rebellion had reached as far as Yorkshire and Somerset. The King then deployed 4000 soldiers who tracked down and executed over 1500 rebels.

"Now is the Time" took Bragg 15 years to write and it is clear that much of this time was spent researching this epic event in England's history.

Interwoven into the drama of the Peasant's Revolt is the relationships between the characters, including the 14 year old Richard II and his mother, Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent whom Bragg describes as one of the most influential women in England.

Julia Baskerville

SBA The Solicitors' Charity

SBA The Solicitors' Charity has been working in the North West to help solicitors and their families for well over 150 years. Its mission? To ensure that no solicitor is unsupported in times of need or crisis

Financial support for solicitors

SBA's charitable object is to relieve the financial hardship of solicitors, former solicitors and their dependants.

There is a perception that SBA is all about supporting elderly or retired lawyers. In fact, most SBA beneficiaries are aged 60 and under and they come from every area and level of legal practice. They do, however, share one characteristic: none have the resources to pay for the normal things in life, things that most of us take for granted.

In recent years, SBA has distributed nearly £50,000 to Manchester lawyers and their families. Awards covered a wide range of everyday needs, including help with the basics - food, clothing and heating.

SBA was also on hand to help with urgent one-off items, when boilers broke down or roofs needed repairing.

We sometimes took care of priority debts, if clearing them could put household finances back on to a permanently even keel.

Help with career transition

Times are getting tough for some colleagues, particularly those in criminal practice. SBA's response has been to offer practical, positive support with career transition.

Solicitors who qualify under the financial criteria can join a three-month programme which offers holistic career, job search and wellbeing support via a professional consultancy.

This is an e-learning, portal-based service, backed up with one-to-one skype and telephone coaching.

Where appropriate, SBA can also offer financial support during the programme, so that participants can really focus on their job search, rather than worry about day-to-day household finances.

Can we help someone you know?

Does your HR team know about SBA? Perhaps you know someone finding it hard to cope? We would love to help if we can.

To find out more, please visit our website or get in touch via the details below:

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Email: **sec@sba.org.uk**

SBA in Manchester

Two eminent Manchester solicitors – James Frederick Beever & James Crossley – were actually part of the original group that founded SBA back in 1858. Both were past Presidents of Manchester Law Association and they remained SBA Directors for many years.

SBA has always had strong representation in the North West and this tradition continues today. We have four volunteers in Greater Manchester and look forward to telling you more about them in forthcoming issues of The Messenger.

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E-Learning for Professionals Ltd's on line anti-money laundering training service has proved so popular with regulated organisations that additional compliance courses covering topics such as bribery, data protection, equality & diversity, code of conduct are now being developed. The unique training and management platform allows firms to provide quality training to their staff at a fraction of the cost of other conventional forms of training.

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MLS ADVANTAGE

MLS Advantage member Document Direct endorsed by the Law Society

Document Direct, one of our key MLS Advantage Partners has just received the extremely prestigious accolade of being formally endorsed by the Law Society of England and Wales.

Martyn Best

They join another of our members Moneypenny on this very exclusive roster.

Document Direct provides an integrated typing and transcription service which can save our members over 50% on their typing costs. They also offer significant other benefits of a 24/7 typing and document production service, and significant savings on overheads and related capital costs.

Martyn Best, a Chartered Accountant, formerly with Ernst & Young is founder and Chief Executive of Document Direct, and having established the company in 2005, it now delivers its service to over 140 clients in the UK, Ireland and across the globe.

The service is supported by over 140 experienced and professional legal and medical secretaries, all of whom are based in the UK.

Simon Drane, Executive Director of Business Development of the Law Society said: "The Law Society is always seeking to support its members to reduce costs through working in a more efficient manner.

"Outsourcing transcription services is a growing area of interest to our members.

"The Society conducted a robust tender process to select Document Direct as the preferred supplier of those services.

"Document Direct delivers an excellent transcription service to law firms throughout the UK and across the globe. They demonstrated a thorough and sensitive understanding of the issues involved in moving typing to an external provider. Their approach to confidentiality and security should give confidence to our members and we are delighted that they have accepted our invitation to become an endorsed partner of the Law Society."

Martyn Best, said: "Document Direct strives to reflect the professionalism and client service provided by our legal and other customers and we achieve this on a daily basis. Our customers include Top 30 law firms Hill Dickinson, Lewis Silkin and Nabarro together with many mid-tier firms across the North-West, UK and Ireland.

"We are delighted to have been appointed as an endorsed partner of the Law Society and we are looking forward to working with the Law Society and its members. Our service will help them save money, improve their own efficiency and client service and help make their professional and personal lives easier."

Our very own Bill Kirby assessed the worthiness of Document Direct to become a member of MLS Advantage over two years ago, and he was delighted to hear of this news, "Document Direct's services represent all that is good about one of my favourite subjects of "agile working". They have taken a long-standing and traditional service such as typing and transformed it to provide a more efficient and flexible means of delivering what today's modern lawyers need. Once again, through clever use of technology, we are seeing another great service being made available to our members."

The appointment represents the continuing development of the Law Society of England and Wales' Membership Extra programme which has successfully delivered additional benefits to its members for the last 15 years - http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/membership-extra/

Document Direct has offices in London, Liverpool and Dublin.

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INSURANCE BROKERS

Risk Update

Welcome to the November edition of Risk Update.

'Cyber Fraud Claims' - What steps can you take?

Many of you will be aware of the nature of several frauds aimed at solicitors' practices in recent months, with extensive media coverage highlighting this problem, ranging from your own trade press to the BBC. You may even have been a potential victim yourself as the subject of an attack by the fraudsters.

Once the fraud is discovered, will you be insured either by your professional indemnity policy or by your Cyber Liability policy, if indeed you have bought or are considering buying that type of insurance cover?

You may have the benefit of cover for the loss of clients' funds under your PII policy, though that can depend upon the circumstances – you may have seen the case recently aired by the BBC in which PI insurers have seemingly refused to indemnify on the grounds that they regard the firm concerned as having been complicit in facilitating the transfer of funds. Furthermore, even when cover does apply here, the future availability of PI insurance, and of course Cyber Liability cover, could become difficult.

If the worst were to happen and PII cover in particular were to be unavailable, you would have to begin the process of closing your doors.

This bulletin therefore provides a dual focus – on the insurance issue (on which more later) and on a continuing threat which has also become apparent – that of the fraudster, after having initially accessed your systems, emails etcetera, coming back again in a further attempt to commit fraud, albeit perhaps in a slightly different way from their first attempt. What steps can you take to prevent this happening for a first or, just as seriously, a second or a third time?

For PII cover to continue to be available to you, it will be essential to explain - in detail - the action taken to prevent fraud, all the more so if it has already happened. While it may not yet be in the public domain, PI insurers will almost certainly be looking for minimum levels of IT security to be in place before they will consider offering cover. This scenario already applies where a request for Cyber Liability cover is made, by way of specific questions within the proposal form, and these minimum requirements are only likely to develop further.

Let's take the example of fraudsters having accessed your emails and successfully diverted client monies into a bank account which they control.

Once they have access to your emails, the fraudsters will themselves contact your clients by email when they know a transfer of funds is about to take place. Imitating and using similar language as already used by you, they will respond to your clients in such a manner in order to ensure that suspicions are not aroused, using an email address with a domain name remarkably similar to your own but crucially changing perhaps a single letter or digit. Your client may therefore not notice anything untoward, while the fraudster will manage your own Inbox to ensure the same applies to you. From then on, the transfer of funds to the fraudster's bank account takes place.

Having suffered a loss, you will no doubt bring in a specialist to identify and eliminate the problem, secure the vulnerable elements of your systems, avert potential similar losses in respect of other clients undertaking similar transactions, and look at future protection.

However, recent expereince indicates that the fraudster, having been successful, WILL return, possibly adopting a slightly different method.

To combat these first and subsequent attacks, you will have to consider working with a suitable IT Security Consultant to look at the specific risk management measures to be taken, inter alia:

- secure software, hardware, anti-virus software, firewall, daily scans, etc;
- audits of your IT systems and services, for example emails, banking, cloud services, passwords and so on.

Prevention of such scams in the first place is very important though should it nonetheless happen, it is essential you take immediate steps to prevent recurrence. MFL Professional, as advisers to the legal profession including Manchester Law Society, would look to work with you by providing practical assistance and advice for the implementation of a suitable insurance solution in the form of professional indemnity insurance which dovetails with Cyber Liability cover, which will respond quickly and in a pro-active manner, including from the security aspect, to enable you to continue to practice. More stories are likely to reach your trade press over the coming weeks and months of firms ultimately having to close their doors after having been hit by cyber fraud and being unable to obtain insurance cover going forward, this aside from those subject to SRA Intervention.

We have been requested to assist in a number of such cases, albeit at the very end of the October 2015 renewal season, as firms were about to find themselves in the Extended Indemnity Period. It is too late to wait until your PI renewal is almost upon you before addressing these issues; by considering them now and seeking to dovetail your PII with the Cyber Liability cover that may available, you would be in a far stronger position when your PI renewal next comes around.

At this point we strongly advise you to tread carefully. We are aware of a number of 'Cyber Liability' insurance policies having been launched recently by a host of insurers. However, our investigations reveal that in the majority of cases little or no thought has been given to the operation of the third party liability in terms of possible cross over with firms' professional indemnity policies.

This will lead to problems with the handling and mitigation of fraudulent incidents: who will investigate and deal with the matter, bring in security specialists and so on? In turn, a badly handled crisis could have serious repercussions down the line for you, perhaps the additional fraudulent claims mentioned above, SRA involvement, reputational problems and other ramifications.

In saying this, we have established that at least some insurers offering Cyber Liability cover have actually given some thought as to how their policy will respond given the possible duplication of (third party) cover under the PII policy, whether the latter is held by themselves or not.

If you have concerns about these developments or indeed have already faced them and had limited help from your professional advisers, then we would be happy to discuss the position further with you either by telephone or by meeting at your office.

This article does not present a complete or comprehensive statement of the law, nor does it constitute legal advice. It is intended only to highlight issues that may be of interest to MLS members and solicitors. Specialist advice should always be sought in any particular case.

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HEALTH & FITNESS FOR BUSY PROFESSIONALS

HOW TO LIVE BETTER, FROM MATT BRERETON-PATEL

Bust Your Stress: Look Better, Live Better, Live Longer

Another week, another executive casualty; this time the CEO of United Airlines suffered a heart attack aged 56.

No matter your age, avoiding long term health issues starts today. While stress can be positive, helping you to reach goals or overcome a difficult situation, chronic, long term, daily stress is a silent and sure killer – research from Harvard and Stanford suggests that workplace stress contributes to 120,000 deaths each year in US.

While we've come to think of stress as a normal, natural part of daily life, it's anything but, and remediating the effects of stress is at the forefront of our personal training protocols. Here are just a few of those effects:

- weight gain
- Diabetes
- coronary heart disease
- sleep problems
- digestive system issues
- poor concentration, poor judgement
- excess alcohol consumption
- a weak immune system
- anxiety and mood problems, feeling overwhelmed
- sexual dysfunction
- overall lower quality of life

You have a choice as to whether you turn 40, 50, 60, and beyond in the best possible shape given your life circumstances (a well maintained vintage Ferrari), or whether you end up broken down, rusted up and abandoned by the roadside.

You can take control:

1/ Make time. There's famous joke that goes 'What fits your busy schedule better, exercising one a day or being dead 24 hours a day?'. Harsh, but increasingly, true.

2/ Exercise is the best medicine. A sedentary lifestyle has been shown to be disastrous for your health – this doesn't mean you need to thrash yourself or that working out 7 times per week is better than moving your body 3 or 4 times per week.

3/ Don't diet. Just eat real food. Not too much. Not too little.

4/ Supplement intelligently. Supplements can help, but the wrong supplements can waste your money or cause harm.

5/ Take time out. Have more fun. Spend quality time with friends and family. Feel happy. Do yoga. Learn to breathe deeply. Get into nature.

6/ Engage with an expert. Of course I would say this, but you can also bet that trying to do it all yourself is like me trying to rewire my house, or representing myself in court: you could do it yourself, it'll take more time and effort, the results are likely to be less than optimal, and could be outright disastrous. There are specialist skills worth investing in.

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Matt Brereton-Patel

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THE PARLOUR YOUR NAUGHTY LITTLE SECRET...

The World according to Fran

OH MY GOD - you will NEVER guess what……
Jack has got a girlfriend!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Can you believe it?
Can I believe it?
Can I cope with it?
Can Jack cope with it?

There we were, driving along the M61 (why does he always pick the M61 when he is going to tell me some monumental news as I can't pull over and put my head between my knees!), when he casually said grunted "Mum, I've got somefing ter tell yer".

"Oh yes" I replied – thinking that maybe he had got into trouble at work for not shaving again and looking like he had, and I am very sorry to say this, pubic hair growing out of his face.

"I've got a girlfriend and don't you DARE tell anybody" he snarled.

How I kept the car on the road is beyond me.

How I kept from fainting/screeching/sobbing/laughing is beyond me.
"And how do you feel about that?" I enquired. (I have obviously been reading far too many psychology books – 'How to raise your only child', 'How to raise boys', 'Shaping the man inside', 'Parenting Teens' etc – you get the picture!)

"S'alright" he said

"What is her name?" I enquired (I thought it best to go slowly before finding out if she was an orphan or not – well I have always said to Jack to either be gay or marry an orphan so that I could be sure that they would always come to me on Christmas Day).

"I am NOT telling you that until it is serious and don't nag on about it"

Quite frankly I couldn't believe he had just said that – "don't nag on about it - moi?" Anyway by the end of the journey into Manchester (and from Adlington (Lancs) in the rush hour it's about an hour I had found out the following:

Jack really will not tell me her name until they are serious.

She works behind the bar in Revolution.
I am NEVER to go in Revolution (like I would anyway!)

He will tell me when they are girlfriend and boyfriend. In his eyes he told me that it goes like this:

Friend
Girlfriend
Fiancée
Wife
Dead

(Well at least he is being positive and isn't thinking of divorce.)

I did plead with him to let me know her name before she became his fiancée! Watch this space and if anybody fancies coming for a quick drink one night after work drop me an e-mail to sort out a date.

I'll meet you in Revolution…….!!!!!!!

Fran Eccles-Bech
Chief Executive

Monthly Competition

Don Giovanni established in 1984, is Manchester's longest serving Italian restaurant. Being adjacent to St Peter's Square in the heart of Manchester City Centre it is perfectly located for the Palace and Opera theatre, Manchester Central, Bridgewater Hall, Manchester Library and many other attractions, galleries and event spaces.

The 150 cover restaurant boasts floor to ceiling windows, modern furnishings, and a 50-seated private dining room with full AV facilities including projector and motorised screen. Be it intimate, celebratory or corporate dining, the restaurant is perfect for all occasions. In 2015 we were accredited with the Les Routiers Gold Award for exceptional standards in food and service and also The Italian Awards Winner of Most Romantic Restaurant in England.

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To be in with a chance of winning a 3 Course Dinner for two people with a bottle of champagne simply answer the following question:

Question – In what year was Don Giovanni's established?

and send to FranEccles-Bech@manchesterlawsociety.org.uk no later than 15th October 2015.

The winner of the Manchester Camerata competition was Charlotte Ferguson from JMW Solicitors LLP

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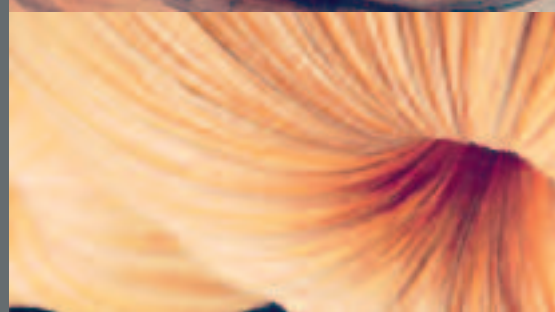

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The views and opinions expressed in the Manchester Messenger are those of the individual contributors and not of the Manchester Law Society

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My client, a successful high street practice based close to Stockport, are looking to appoint a Conveyancing Solicitor. The firm offer a very friendly working environment. This opportunity requires a Qualified Solicitor, and someone who is able to handle a busy caseload in Residential Property and to engage in there own administrative work when needed.
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