

#90 STEPPING UP ISSUE

CitySolicitor

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CITY OF LONDON SOLICITORS' COMPANY AND THE CITY OF LONDON LAW SOCIETY

*“Doing well in life is like going up and down stairs.
It’s easy to go down but harder to go up.”*

KIMBER SIMCHAYOF

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editor's letter



Welcome to our Autumn edition of City Solicitor.

As London, and the City in particular, becomes increasingly full of exceptionally high pieces of architecture, it seems apt that the theme for our last issue of 2015 should be "stepping up", with all that could entail.

We looked at how at both ends of our profession, from qualifying as a solicitor to reaching the pinnacle as a member of the judiciary in the High Court, entry is changing. Is this a stepping up? Or a dumbing down? Read current viewpoints – and why not share yours with us?

Also, as traffic and pollution in our City step up so has the amount of cyclists. Is this a healthy way of commuting? Or a health hazard?

Too few solicitors are judges. We speak to two who stepped up to the task.

All this and our usual livery news, motoring column, Ex Parte offers, news of what's coming up in our City and Last Word make for a lively and stimulating issue.

I hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed putting it together.



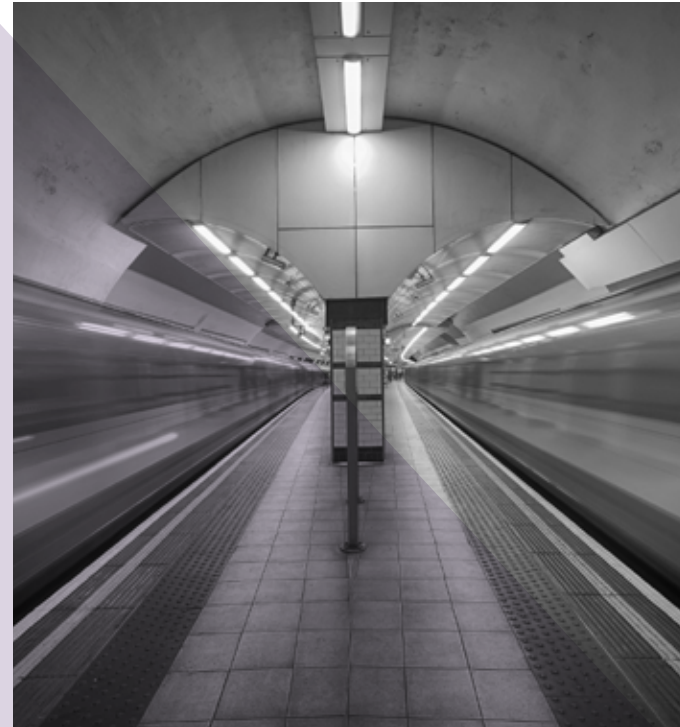
John Abramson, Editor

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ALL CHANGE ON THE LEGAL PROFESSIONAL LINE

From school to High Court Judge direct.

This route no longer requires stops at university, LPC, training contract, circuit judge, recorder. From entering the legal profession to reaching the pinnacle of High Court Judge, it's all change. The legal profession is rethinking its entry requirements at both ends of the spectrum; from how one becomes a solicitor to how one becomes a High Court Judge is all under review and up for some pretty drastic changes.

These changes are all made with the intention of getting the best people from the biggest pool and not limiting the profession to a privileged few. Sex, race and class should not be the discriminating factors but simply excellence.

City Solicitor examined the changes and found out current reactions. Are we stepping up? Or dumbing down?

| SO, YOU WANT TO BE A SOLICITOR?

Once upon a time, you didn't have to go to university to become a solicitor. You did five years articles and took College of Law Exams in two parts. Indeed, some very senior partners of our very top legal firms took this route. Then it all changed and a degree was compulsory. But now, it's all changing again. Why?

We spoke to two people at the SRA (Solicitors Regulation Authority), the body that is responsible for these somewhat controversial changes, former Linklaters partner, Nick Eastwell, an adviser to the SRA with specific regard to City firms, and Julie Brannan, ex litigation partner at Herbert Smith Freehills and SRA Director of Education and Training. Brannan says in order to assess what is being proposed, one needs to start with looking at the problem that needs to be addressed.







"In 1993 when the LPC was introduced, there was only one pathway to qualification. There were highly specified requirements and inputs, strict controls over who could teach, Law Society inspections, common assessment regulations and no other ways of qualifying. In 2015 there are a number of routes. These different pathways are in response to the demand. But the issue is there is no way to ensure comparability.

Whilst the flexibility on offer is a good thing, we need to be able to demonstrate they all meet the same standards." At the moment there is no way of measuring consistency. Hence the need for some sort of common assessment.

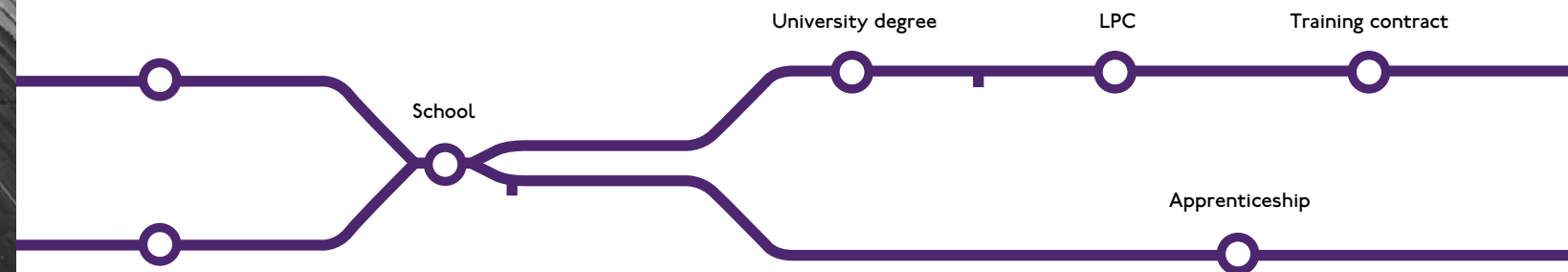
In order to determine what standards a solicitor needs to achieve, it is fundamental to understand what a solicitor needs to do. So, based on research with over 2000 people on April 1st the SRA published a competence statement (<http://tinyurl.com/nzlqz6m>). Eastwell says "it encompasses all the things you instinctively know a solicitor should be able to do but this is the first time it's been pulled together into one strand." So, having clearly articulated what a solicitor needs to do, how can we ensure that everyone who qualifies as a solicitor meets these standards?

The proposal is that irrespective of which pathway someone chooses to become a solicitor, the traditional university plus LPC plus training contract, or an apprenticeship (reminiscent of the old five year articles) – or indeed any other way, everyone has to pass the same set of tests and therefore there is a set standard for everyone. These tests will fall into two parts; initially a knowledge test. This multiple choice

Who City Solicitor spoke with:

-  Nick Eastwell
Adviser, (City Law Firms) to the SRA
-  Julie Brannan
Director of Education and Training, SRA
-  Caroline Pearce
Chair of the Training Committee of the CLLS
-  Joanne Peel
Head of HR for the Judiciary
-  Malcolm Watts
Head of HR Policy for the Judiciary
-  Tony King
Member CLLS Committee

test can be taken at any time but most likely for those at university it will be taken at the end of their second year once they have completed the foundation subjects. The second part will be a series of skills tests testing a range of oral, written and practical skills. This entire programme is being conducted ▶



with very close contact and liaison with solicitors, canvassing their view and opinions. Eastwell says the SRA recognises the detail of the programme is crucial and again all of that is being discussed closely with law firms. He also notes that it has not been finally decided to what extent training and experience in the workplace will be retained. He is emphatic that this is “not about dumbing down” but about consistency. He says the SRA are very conscious of the “brand” of solicitor and what that means not just in this country but internationally and the aim is not to undermine it in any way but rather to ensure it continues to deliver its promise of quality.

Not everyone agrees.

We spoke with Caroline Pearce, Chair of the CLLS Training Committee. Pearce talks of the new proposals as “a root and branch overhaul. This is not just a change, it is an overhaul. It’s important that all interested parties appreciate how major the changes are. It will look nothing like it does now.”

Pearce says the SRA speaks of the standards for coming into the profession being wholly inconsistent but she thinks it is also driven by the lack of social mobility within the profession and the need to widen the opportunities for people to become solicitors, which the CLLS supports. She says of the changes that there “is no clear pathway to qualify, including no prerequisites, no entry GSEs, A levels, degree, LPC, training contract or period of recognised training”.

She expresses concern that unless the requirements to qualification are got right there could also be a “real threat to the brand of solicitor both domestically and internationally”.

Pearce talks about how the training contract is perceived as a real advantage and not making it a requirement could result in London “losing ground to New York”, in terms of choosing to become a solicitor rather than a New York attorney. Her real concern is that there is “little evidence that there is a focus on quality. If the SRA goes down the centralised assessment route, getting that right is crucial. Consistency doesn’t equal quality. This isn’t a different pathway. This is no pathway.”

Pearce is not alone in her doubts. Tony King, member of the CLLS Committee, sees the needs for a review of some parts of the qualification process but has concerns about the consequences of the SRA’s plans.

Law degrees are not regulated by the SRA and academic freedom means differences in coverage are inevitable.

If that impacts on common standards at the point of qualification, the concept of a common assessment would seem to make sense.

However, the devil is in the detail. Will the proposed new approach be able to reflect the diversity of practice across the profession? Will it achieve its aim at an acceptable cost?

He too speaks of the brand of solicitor and is concerned about the impact on that if it is possible to qualify without going through any formal training programme and without a requirement of some work experience in legal practice. It seems more consultations are necessary before all can agree a way forward. ►



ARE YOU READY FOR THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE?

It’s not just at entry level that things are changing in our profession. At the other end of careers, who and how one becomes a High Court Judge is being overhauled too.

As of July 2015:

“The Judicial Appointments Commission will be running an exercise to appoint up to 14 people as Deputy High Court Judges without the need for them to sit as Recorders first.

The successful candidates will be sitting in High Court civil and family work, so they will need no experience of criminal work. They may also have little or no experience of attending or appearing in the High Court – or any court for that matter – and the process of completing an application form and going through a selection process for judicial appointment may be completely alien to them – and, quite frankly, daunting.

The judiciary are therefore offering a small number of top quality candidates from diverse backgrounds, with no previous experience of judicial office, the opportunity to take part in a pilot programme of work-shadowing and mentoring to acquaint them with the culture and pace of the High Court and a workshop to prepare them for the selection exercise that the Judicial Appointments Commission will be running.”

– Lady Justice Hallett

We spoke to Joanne Peel (Head of HR for the Judiciary) and to Malcolm Watts (Head of HR Policy for the Judiciary) about this new scheme known as the “New Route to the High Court”.

The scheme (now closed but hopefully to be iterated in future years) offered opportunities for exceptional lawyers and legal academics to apply to sit in the High Court. Up until now you had to be a circuit judge, a recorder or a judge in the upper tribunals in order to apply. Solicitors who were not recorders and could not get released from their firms and academics with legal qualifications were ruled out.

But the feeling is now that if you want the absolute best people to become judges, then it makes sense to look to a bigger pool. It is not simply about diversity. Whilst women, ethnic minorities and those with social mobility will all be included in the pool, it is about finding the best, irrespective of anything else. It is about looking at a wider range of people, of different ages, all of whom are already successful in their own careers and finding the ones who are genuinely wanting to become judges and have the legal knowledge to do it well and also the passion. It is about eliminating the ones who just want to put it on their CV or are looking for something to do in retirement. By only looking at barristers hitherto, maybe some of the best people were not being picked up. By widening the opportunity, so we are widening the diversity

of thinking and bringing in people with different forms of expertise and so ideally there should never be a narrow perspective. Those without any previous judicial experience will still be competing against barristers and solicitors who do have that knowledge – but it’s not just about what you have done before, it’s about finding the very best. By having the very best people, public confidence should increase making our Judiciary even more world respected than it currently is. The scheme included a support group, and one aim of the group was to ensure that those applying are really sure it is the right decision for them. They will probably be applying the law in a very different way from how they had done it before and ultimately they might decide another position may be more suitable, like tribunals or circuit bench. The point is to be left with only those who are sure it is for them – and then to pick the very best of them to proceed.

Widening the entry pool for both would-be solicitors and aspirant High Court judges must surely mean more good people to select from. Whether the proposals mean a stepping up for our profession, only time will tell. It will be interesting to see how many who applied through the scheme get appointed, and how they fare. And perhaps one day we will see a High Court Judge who was simply a school leaver with no university education whatsoever. CS



SOLICITORS STEPPING UP TO BECOME JUDGES; challenges, pitfalls and rewards.

In 2013, only one per cent of High Court applications were from solicitors in private practice and, none were successful.

The pathway to becoming a High Court Judge was predominantly one reserved for barristers, but there are some very high profile and excellent Judges who are solicitors. City Solicitor spoke to two of them and tried to find out what motivated them to take the leap and what the reality was once they had done it.

Alexandra Marks has been a Deputy High Court Judge for four years now, but she only sat for the first time 18 months ago. Why? "I felt daunted" she confessed. But Marks had been a Recorder for quite some time so, in essence, one would think reasonably prepared.

Marks had originally studied Law because she believed in justice and fairness. But as a female Law student in the 1970s she was talked out of becoming a barrister and so took the path to becoming a (highly successful) solicitor at Linklaters.

Whilst she found the work "captivating and stimulating" she didn't feel she had much to do "with the sharp end of justice" and felt her "emotional buttons were just not being pressed." So at the end of the 90's when she saw the role of a Recorder being advertised, she leapt at the opportunity, particularly as they were looking for solicitors and for women. It took two years for her to be appointed but she did not feel in any way prepared.

"It was a bit like Alice stepping through the looking glass. Being a partner in a firm like Linklaters did nothing to prepare me for this. I was unaccustomed to the deferential culture, of being addressed as "your honour". I didn't know the choreography of the Crown Court yet I was expected to conduct the whole thing. The orchestra were all looking at me and I didn't have a clue what to do. Suddenly I was confronted with dealing with human beings at the very point of crisis; defendants, witnesses and jurors. I was dealing with nasty crimes - and it was distressing". But Marks grew to love it. "It's a gratifying experience to know that you can actually do something, make important decisions, do what you think is right."

She says it "enhanced my solicitors practice because you learn to think quickly on your feet, to assimilate and communicate clearly. And my clients loved it. They loved to talk to me about it all". She believes her background as a commercial property lawyer was of no real help in her new work but that

having a "fresh eye" was by no means a disadvantage.

When years later, Marks found out she was eligible to apply to be a Deputy High Court Judge, she went for that too. By simply filling in a one page form. She was informed of her DHCJ appointment by letter, with no interview whatsoever. She was shocked at what seemed to be a total lack of process.

She saw this as a complete contrast to the "rigour and formality" with which the Judicial Appointments Commission, which came into existence in 2006, conduct their selection processes. However, while the JAC was from the outset responsible for Recorder exercises, anomalously until a change in the law in April 2013, the JAC was NOT responsible for DHCJ exercises.

Marks says "as a senior solicitor, you are credible, confident and respected. Your first judicial appointment puts you right down to the bottom of the ladder again". An interesting and astute comment as most would think this would be the top of the ladder. Marks describes suddenly being in the eyes of the public. "Everyone knows if you get it wrong. The scope for humiliation is boundless."

Marks bemoans the fact that there are not "as many solicitors who are High Court Judges as there could or should be." She contrasts this with tribunals where there is a very good representation of solicitors, women and other minorities.

She sees this as being because tribunals are "somehow less threatening" in so ▶





"It's a gratifying experience to know that you can actually do something, make important decisions, do what you think is right."

far as you are "often sitting with other people so judging is a collaborative process. Solicitors are accustomed to dealing with involved paperwork and expressing their final views on paper rather than orally, so being a judge is a completely different way of working."

She also thinks solicitors are being squeezed out by the current "flight from the bar". With more barristers applying, they are often able to present themselves as stronger candidates she believes, because of their "familiarity and good understanding" of what is going on.

She is very keen, therefore, to promote the opportunities and benefits of solicitors becoming judges – from everyone's perspective.

Marks finds that doing something that is "so valuable to society is deeply satisfying as well as intellectually very challenging". For her, it has fulfilled the dream of that young girl wanting to be at the thick end of justice. "This is as good as it gets. Being in a position to do the very best you can."

Michael Caplan has been a partner at Kingsley Napley for over thirty years and has been described as being one of the most formidable lawyers of his generation. When starting off he believed he "never had the ability to go to the bar" so he became an articulated clerk earning £20 a week. High profile cases such as representing Pinochet and advising the McCanns after their daughter Madeleine's disappearance have made him one of very few lawyers whose name rings bells with the public as well as those inside the profession.

As well as being a solicitor, Caplan has spent 20 years sitting in the Crown Court having started on as Assistant

Recorder in 1994 and became a Deputy High Court Judge in 2010. His reasons and motivations for joining the judiciary are somewhat different from Marks. "I thought it would be useful for my day job to know how a Judge thinks, what goes on in his mind."

And that thought was successfully borne out. Caplan talks of his time in the judiciary as being "invaluable and really broadening my knowledge of the law." He talks of how time has changed what was a distinct gap between barristers and solicitors; of how when he started they even had different rooms to change in, but how now really it is all seen as one profession. Caplan stresses that he has always had enormous support from the judiciary at all levels. He also had huge support and encouragement from his firm when he put his name forward and says that support has been rewarded because every time he sits



"[Sitting is] a tremendous responsibility as you are holding futures in your hands."

both in the Crown Court and the High Court he learns something new which is then beneficial to his work.

Despite his huge reputation, Caplan is a humble man who talks about "being nervous every single time I have to sum up". He sees sitting as "a tremendous responsibility as you are holding futures in your hands". He says whilst one can hide in the office, "in Court there is no hiding place."

Caplan admits to finding sentencing particularly difficult (even though he is an esteemed member of the Sentencing Council) and sees it as a real responsibility with a "huge amount of work involved in summing up." His diligence has obviously paid off, for as far as he is aware, he has never been successfully appealed against. Caplan believes "a brilliant advocate does not necessarily make a good Judge". So what does?

He cites one requirement as having the ability, capacity and generosity to be fair to everyone; the defendant as well as the victim. He says there is the need to have "an ability to listen, to absorb, to consider analytically and logically, to have the ability to control proceedings which is not always easy – there is a fine balance between allowing people to have their say but still to maintain control." Caplan says there is "so much material to absorb" not helped by the fact that "the law is always changing".

He says our legal system is the best in the world, by far, and is greatly worried by the effect budget cuts would have on this brilliant system. "More resources are required to carry on". He believes this is important "not just for our place on the world's stage but for absolutely

everyone who comes into contact with the law. Some people's whole lives are in the hands of lawyers and government cuts could have a negative bearing".

Marks and Caplan are two truly exceptional lawyers whose contribution to the judiciary and to all of us is huge. If they are an example of what solicitors can bring to the party, then let's hope there will be a bigger percentage going forward. CS

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BIKES ARE PILING HIGH IN THE CITY



The towering sculpture of bicycles that stood in front of the Gherkin this September for London's Sculpture In The City initiative could not have been more apt.

Bicycles are taking over the city. Literally.

TFL is reporting a pretty consistent 12% rise, year on year. Hackney is the borough which boasts the most cyclists with 10% of all commutes from there being made by bike. In 2000, 0.29 million cycling stages (trips) were made daily. Today its doubled to over 0.6 million.

This growth has been helped hugely by Transport for London's launch in 2010 of the Barclays Cycle Hire system throughout the city's centre, which by 2013 was attracting a monthly ridership of approximately 500,000, peaking at a million rides in July of that year.

But with that increase comes an increase in accidents involving cyclists. The number of cycling deaths and serious injuries has

more on the needs of cyclists. In May 1981, Labour won that control and Livingstone became the GLC leader. The following month, Livingstone announced that the GLC would accede to the LCC's demands, creating a cycling planning unit and spending at least 1% of the yearly transport budget, £2m, on cycling.

In 2000, Livingstone became the first elected Mayor of London, and in 2008 set a target of a 400% increase in cycling between 2008 and 2025. On 9 February 2008 Livingstone announced an estimated £400 million of initiatives to improve and increase cycling and walking, including thousands of new bike parking facilities at railway and tube stations. To be co-ordinated by the TFL and

In 2000, 0.29 million cycling stages (trips) were made daily. Today it's doubled to over 0.6 million.

risen steeply seeing around 20% increase year on year. Cyclists (who paradoxically get on their bikes primarily for health reasons) mainly see the conditions in the City as unsafe. A series of deaths at the end of 2013 prompted criticisms and called for change.

Boris Johnson's name is synonymous with bikes and he has been credited for bringing in a lot of initiatives to encourage us all to get on our bikes, and to be safe - but the story began long before him and from the other end of the political spectrum.

In 1980 Ken Livingstone, who was the Labour Party's transport spokesperson, assured the London Cycling Campaign (LCC) that should Labour take control of the GLC they would spend

London boroughs the aims include having 1 in 10 Londoners making a round trip by bike each day and five per cent of all daily trips by bike by 2025.

In 2008, Livingstone revealed his plans for 12 "Cycle Superhighway" routes connecting inner and outer London, as well as providing cycle zones around the centre.

After he lost the next election, Boris took on the mantle of the cyclists guardian angel and introduced 'Boris bikes'. But the state of London's roads were simply not up to it - and soon campaigners, bloggers, demonstrators and the media were piling on the pressure to make conditions better. Huge investment in a safer cycle infrastructure followed. ▶



In March 2013, City Hall announced £1 billion of improvements to make cycling safer as well as to improve air pollution and inner city congestion in the capital. Johnson planned to build a 15-mile "Crossrail for bikes" running from the West London suburbs across the Westway, through Hyde Park, the Mall and along the Victoria Embankment past Canary Wharf and into East London.

Pugh feels one of the biggest causes is the actual geography of the City's streets. The Medieval street pattern was not created for large modern vehicles.

In March 2013 "The Mayor's Vision for Cycling in London" was announced, a plan which includes a "Crossrail for bikes" running a fully segregated route from east to west across London to be in place by 2016.

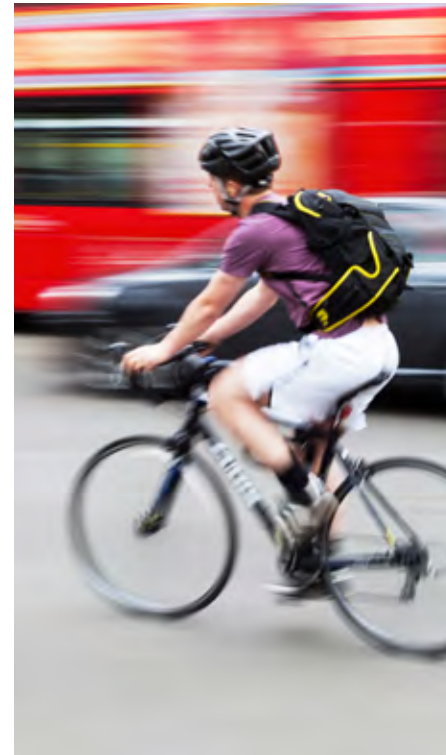
SO, HOW SUCCESSFUL HAS ALL THIS BEEN IN MAKING CYCLISTS FEEL AND BE SAFER ON OUR STREETS?

City Solicitor spoke to two lawyers whose daily commute into work has involved cycling for many many years.

Tim Pugh is a partner at Berwin Leighton Paisner specialising in Planning and Environment Law. He cycles daily from Hove to Brighton station and then from either Victoria or London Bridge to the office; using his Brompton to get to and from meetings.

Pugh believes that the increase in cycling is not a fad but something that will continue especially as congestion in the City increases and it becomes slower and slower to move around either by car or bus. Cycling is the most viable option for getting quickly from A to B. But for many, the biggest barrier to cycling is not feeling safe.

Pugh feels one of the biggest causes is the actual geography of the City's streets. The Medieval street pattern was not created for large modern vehicles. Similarly, today's heavy, four-axle construction vehicles, with poor all-round visibility from their



cabs, were not designed to share tight spaces with pedestrians and unprotected road users. These factors cause problems for HGV drivers, cyclists and pedestrians alike. Drivers of construction vehicles often simply do not see cyclists.

He believes that perspective is important. "The City is the UK's economic powerhouse. Constant renewal is essential to the City accommodating technological progress and maintaining its position as a global financial centre. Major development is critical to the City's ability to compete with other UK European and global financial centres. Nevertheless, hundreds of thousands of pedestrians and cyclists commute into and out of the City every day. Construction traffic is an inevitable consequence of development activity and so banning construction vehicles is not an option. Overly restrictive delivery regimes would simply slow down development, increase cost and prolong construction. Yet accidents and especially fatalities are as unacceptable on the City's roads as on its building sites. Therefore ensuring safe interface between construction traffic and other road



users is vitally important. This needs to be addressed somehow."

sensors, driver aids, CLOCs (Construction Logistics and Cyclist Safety), better

King believes that there are "huge environmental and health benefits in cycling" but that "there are infrastructure and education issues that need to be addressed to make it safer."

Pugh also talks about the state of our streets citing protruding manhole covers and potholes as problems for cyclists, especially in traffic. A cyclist may simply not see them and bounce off; or stop suddenly or swerve away to avoid them – at best seeming erratic and at worst veering into others' paths.

He accepts that more is being done today than ever before and feels already there are huge improvements such as "enhanced driver awareness, vehicle

road layouts, action (finally) on potholes and broken road surfaces, responsible developers and construction industry members beginning to attend to vehicle safety offsite as well as onsite, new routemasters having better visibility, two-way cycle-lanes on quieter one way streets (although not all taxi drivers recognise it!), and TFL cycle superhighways."

Pugh recognises that cyclists are not perfect themselves and sees their biggest faults as not stopping at red lights or pedestrian crossings.

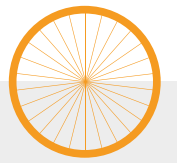
This alienates drivers and causes conflict with the huge number of people in the City who choose walking as their primary mode of transport.

This criticism was shared by Tony King, a member of the CLLS Committee, who has spent most of his career commuting on his bicycle between his home in Highgate and offices in the City and Canary Wharf. He talked of how the morning ride, downhill most of the way and around Regent's Canal was a delightful start to the day but somewhat of a contrast to the uphill journey home.

Like Pugh, King is none too happy with cyclists who treat red lights as "Give way" signs. He has seen too many "near misses" with pedestrians. He also agrees that the state of our roads is awful and says potholes are responsible for a lot of the accidents cyclists have.

He believes that there are "huge environmental and health benefits in cycling" but that "there are infrastructure and education issues that need to be addressed to make it safer."

King has been cycling since he was 11 years old and says it is his primary form of exercise. It obviously is doing its work as he looks trim and fit and much younger than his confessed years. Whilst he agrees that a lot has been done and still needs to be done with our roads, he also feels there is a need for more education for all road users. Drivers, cyclists and pedestrians all need to be aware of each other.



LONDON CYCLING STATS:



12% rise in cycling as a form of transport year on year



10% of all commutes from Hackney made by bike – the largest of any London borough



Daily cycling trips made in London



20% increase of cycling related deaths and serious injuries year on year

London is still a long way from being the cycling centre that Amsterdam is where over 63% of the population use bikes daily, and it is the first mode of transport. But we are heading in that direction.

So, we must continue to strive to make cycling as safe as possible and the responsibility for that lies in many hands; town planners, councils, construction companies, other road users and, not forgetting, cyclists themselves. **CS**



What's on the up in London.

The 'must do' list for all City Solicitors this Autumn;
like the city itself, a highly cosmopolitan cocktail.



CHINESE CONTROVERSY

AI WEIWEI AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY

Love him or hate him, he never fails to surprise, shock, provoke, inspire and take your breath away.

Filling the Main Galleries of the Royal Academy, this is the first major institutional collection of Ai Weiwei's work to be held in the UK and spans two decades.

It has taken 10 months to bring this show together, with teams working across 3 continents.

A big production resulting in a big production.

With no passport and unable to leave China, it is incredible how this extraordinary man has managed to still be intrinsically involved in how and where each piece is positioned through virtual tours and the use of Skype. He collaborated with Harry Pearce from Pentagram who flew to Beijing to conceive the poster advertising the show. And he has even authored the audio guide.

Recorded on his iPhone whilst being interviewed about the exhibition, Weiwei spoke for one hour, unscripted and unprompted about each and every piece, describing them so articulately that it had to be shared with the public.



One of the greatest logistical challenges of the exhibit was not Weiwei's absence but the installation of "Straight", a sculpture which, at 90 tonnes, is the heaviest ever shown in the Royal Academy. It required enlisting an architect and structural engineer to ensure that the floors of the 19th century building could sustain the weight.

To make the work, Weiwei and his assistants covertly collected hundreds of twisted steel rods from buildings

destroyed by the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. The rods were transported to Beijing, straightened by hand and arranged in a pattern resembling the earthquake's seismic waves. It is a monument to the victims, and a critique of China's construction industry.

In order to get the show to as many people globally as possible, even if they have no hope whatsoever of coming to London, the exhibit's visitors are actively encouraged, unlike in other galleries, to take pictures on their phone and to post on social media.

This is definitely an exhibit not to be missed. Ideally, it should be witnessed personally and not just via social media. And now with a reissued passport and a somewhat embarrassing error corrected by our own Government, it looks like Weiwei will be present himself. **CS**

19 September - 13 December
Saturday - Thursday 10am-6pm
Friday 10am-10pm
Main Galleries, Burlington House
£17.60 (without donation £16).

PORTUGUESE PIONEERING

NUNO MENDES AT TABERNA DO MERCADO IN SPITALFIELDS

If you have given up trying to get a reservation at the much hyped and celebrity filled Chiltern Firehouse, or if that whole razamataz is just not up your street, now you can still savour the delights Nuno Mendes conjures up without the fuss and without the wait.

Mendes recently opened his own restaurant, Taberna do Mercado, in the heart of Spitalfields.

The restaurant is open from 8.00 am most days offering delicious, mouthwatering Portuguese breakfasts, lunches and dinners and, with the exception of a two hour lunch slot where reservations are taken, it's walk in only. Yes, you can expect a long wait. But it will be a lot shorter than the one for Chiltern Firehouse.

Dishes are very authentically Portuguese. As are the wines. Choose from fermented game sausage, Corvina belly, prawn rissoles and a whole host of other unusual treats all utterly delicious. Small, friendly, casual, welcoming - and very Portuguese, Taberna do Mercado is definitely worth a visit. **CS**



Taberna do Mercado is open from 12 noon all day every day.*

Also open from Monday to Friday from 8am-10.30am for coffee and a simple Portuguese breakfast.

You can book a table for lunch from 12-2.15pm online or by calling 0207 375 0649.

Between 3-6pm you can walk in for drinks, cured meats, cheeses and other cold snacks.

Dinner is from 6-9.30pm walk in only.

*Except Sundays when there is a long lunch service from 12pm-5pm. Please note the restaurant is closed for dinner on Sunday evenings, but there is a selection of cold snacks from 5pm-7.30pm.

Old Spitalfields Market, 107B Commercial St, London E1 6BG

GREEK GEMS

MEDEA AT THE ALMEIDA

With all that has been going on in the world of late, the term Greek Tragedy has taken on a whole new meaning. And the Greek series at the Almeida theatre in Islington has reinvented it still further.

The series began with an almost four hour production of Oresteia, set in present day, highly political and very relevant to the 21st Century. It received huge accolades from both the public and the press.

(If you missed it, tickets sold out immediately. It transferred to the Trafalgar Studios in August where it will be playing until November, so you get a second chance.) Next came Bakkhai, an untranslatable Greek word and an unforgettable production.

Now, Medea.

Medea's marriage is breaking up. And so is everything else. Testing the limits of revenge and liberty, Euripides' seminal play cuts to the heart of gender politics and asks what it means to be a woman and a wife.

Again, timeless stuff. As relevant as when it was first written. And produced and directed to make it even more so. Almeida Artistic Director, Rupert Goold, (The Merchant of Venice, King Charles III, American Psycho) and award-winning feminist writer Rachel Cusk (Outline, Aftermath) collaborated to bring this controversial and stunning play to the stage. It stars Goold's wife, Kate Fleetwood, who has definitely come a long way from Harry Potter!

It is this season's red hot ticket. Make sure you get your hands on one. **CS**



Oresteia at Trafalgar Studios
22 Aug - 7 Nov
14 Whitehall, SW1A 2DY
BOX OFFICE: 0844 871 7632
Medea at the Almeida
29 Sept - 14 Nov
Almeida Street, Islington N1 1TA
BOX OFFICE: 020 7359 4404
boxoffice@almeida.co.uk



What we've been up to

A diary of our Livery events.

Lord Mayor's Show 2015

On Saturday 14th November the City of London Solicitors' Company will once again enter into the spirit of the Lord Mayor's Show to mark the swearing in of the 688th Lord Mayor. This year is the 800th Anniversary of the Show and the Company is delighted to continue its collaboration with Harlesden-based "Mahogany Carnival" to create a float entitled "Keeping the City Afloat" which will see solicitors in magnificent over-sized water and marine-themed costumes entertaining the crowds lining the route.

The Company has been a regular part of the Lord Mayor's Show since 1980. We are always looking for members to join us on our float, so please contact the Clerk (mail@citysolicitors.org.uk) if you would like to take part in this unique City experience. The photos below will give you a flavour of last year's entry.



The Master's Weekend in Burgundy

At the end of April, a group of Liverymen enjoyed a fantastic weekend in Burgundy, visiting various producers in the vineyards around the picturesque town of Beaune, to expand their knowledge of Les Grands Vins de Bourgogne.

Livery Dinner 2015 – Haberdashers' Hall

This year's Livery Dinner will take place on Wednesday 18th November 2015 when Liverymen and their guests are invited to join the Master and Wardens at Haberdashers' Hall.

The Haberdashers' Company is one of the Great Twelve Livery Companies. From its medieval origins in the haberdashery trade, it has evolved and developed into a significant supporter of schools and education. The Company's first Hall, on Gresham Street, was completed in 1461 but it now resides in one of the City's most modern Livery Halls in West Smithfield. Opened by the Queen in 2002 and built around a cloistered courtyard, this unique building combines modern architecture with traditional design and building materials, with the main Livery Hall clad in North American oak.

We are privileged to have Sir Peter Hendy, the former Commissioner of Transport for London and the new Chairman of Network Rail as our speaker for the evening and we encourage all Liverymen to join the Master and Wardens. Tickets and more details are available from the Clerk.

For more information about becoming a Liveryman of the Company, please contact the Clerk at mail@citysolicitors.org.uk



The City of London Solicitors' Company Prize

The Company Prize for 2015 was awarded to Philip Reid, a trainee with CMS Cameron McKenna LLP. This award is made each year to a trainee at a City firm who has gained a distinction on the Legal Practice Course and who, based on an essay competition and interview, shows the most promise as a future City Solicitor. Philip's essay, entitled "The Billable Byte" suggests the profession must "step up" to face the challenges posed by technology.



The Billable Byte

Five years is a long time in technology. By 2020, driverless cars are expected to enter general production. But were you to stop a lawyer on Cheapside tomorrow and ask for their predictions for legal technological advances over the same time period, their likely response would be a shrug of the shoulders.

They could be forgiven for being unaware of the launch earlier this year of a virtual lawyer named Ross, given it passed entirely unreported in the legal press. Based on IBM's Watson, one of the world's most sophisticated cognitive computers, Ross can understand natural human language, and conduct legal research based on the same questions one might ask of a trainee. So why are developments such as this not big news for most City lawyers?

A partial justification for the shrugged response is that, while Ross may be able to review over a billion documents a second to give an answer almost instantaneously, his utilisation figures would be dreadful. The billable hour still lies at the heart of City law firms' business model, creating little incentive to invest in technology that enables tasks to be completed more quickly.

Neither has there yet been much pressure to do so from clients, who are understandably risk adverse and happy to leave complex legal work in the proven hands of skilled lawyers. Together with the fact that the profession is regulated, these factors have traditionally allowed City firms to take a reactive approach to adopting technology.

But over the next five years, the argument that the work done by City firms could never be automated will ring increasingly hollow, as tasks currently completed by lawyers become capable of being performed more cheaply and (importantly) more accurately automatically. In a world where computers can be entrusted to drive cars, they must in time be trusted to draft, review and even negotiate legal documents. More immediately, there are numerous smaller legal tasks ripe for automation (and already being automated), from proof-reading to producing first drafts of documents. Firms may find that, as work becomes more automated, some of the resulting profits will ultimately flow to the developer and owner of the relevant software; and clients will be reluctant to pay much of an additional margin to law firms.

But these challenges also present opportunities. Proactive firms are already looking to invest directly in developing new technologies, avoiding the potential loss of their profit margin to developers and allowing them to undercut firms slower to adapt. This will require not only technical innovation, but an increased willingness to focus on the final legal product rather than the time taken to achieve it. Firms that continue to shrug their shoulders will be caught by the often rapid pace of technological change, as has already happened in other sectors. Five years may not sound a long time in a profession that has lasted centuries: but to retain their place at the forefront of legal services, City firms must start to realise that it can be. CS

Philip Reid, CMS Cameron McKenna LLP



Peter Alfandary with his 2CV



FOX ENJOYS THE SHOWS

By Ronnie Fox

There could hardly be a greater contrast than that between the two motor shows which I visited recently.

The Third Annual St John's Wood "Classic and Supercar Pageant" was held in June. Organized by the St John's Wood Business Association and generously sponsored by Investec and local estate agents, the money raised by the event was shared between two charities, Rays of Sunshine and the St. John's Wood Hospice. There was an amazing range of cars on display: a 1914 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost once used by King Edward VIII, a 1969 Morris Minor Panda car in police livery, a remarkable 1920's Bentley (in British Racing Green, of course) harking back to the days when Bentley competed at Le Mans, Hugette, the pretty Citroën 2CV which has previously featured in this column, a Morse-style Jaguar Mk II 3.8

(supposedly offering Grace, Pace and Space – though there is not much room in the back) and a 1972 Fiat 500 (with very little room anywhere at all!).

I have a deep interest in agriculture. I never miss an edition of The Archers and the pinnacle of my professional career to date has been advising Ambridge solicitor, Usha Gupta, on partnership issues. So it was a particular thrill to see a Lamborghini Tractor as well as a beautifully restored Miura S. At the other end of St John's Wood High Street was a funfair erected to coincide with the Pageant the funfair was greatly enjoyed by a couple of the Fox grandchildren.

The motoring event of September was Salon Privé featuring dozens of supercars and even a few hypercars. Hypercars? Not Ferraris or Porsches; there were almost as many examples in the car parks as in the show itself. Try Googling Toroidion. Tramontana, Arash, Koenigsegg and Zenvo.

This was the tenth Salon Privé and the first to be held in the spectacular gardens of Blenheim Palace. I was fortunate to attend on the Concours d'Elégance Day. There were some

truly beautiful cars with drivers and passengers in period costume. My particular favourites were the 1902 Oldsmobile Curved Dash and a prize-winning blue 1937 Delahaye cabriolet.

The cars on show were presented by private collectors, dealers in luxury cars and just a few manufacturers like Rolls-Royce, Bentley, and Aston Martin. As has become traditional, an auction was held in conjunction with the show. I was sorely tempted to put in a couple of bids. Perhaps it is just as well that I managed to restrain myself. The magnificent and extremely rare Aston Martin DB6 Vantage Volante on which I had my eye sold for £900,000! But it would be possible to acquire a classic car like an XK 120 or 150 for a five figure sum. Perhaps next year I will seek the approval of Mrs Fox? Boodles were showing some beautiful pieces of jewellery and a suitable item might just persuade her?

As you would expect, the side stands at Salon Privé were in a different league from the St John's Wood funfair: delightful replicas made in Lancashire for very lucky children (www.juniorclassic.com), luxury keys for planes, yachts and cars re-manufactured by a jeweller – from £1,400 plus VAT – (www.noblekey.de), very high quality – and expensive – car care products (www.swissvax.co.uk), bespoke fitted

The motoring event of September was Salon Privé featuring dozens of supercars and even a few hypercars.

garage interiors (www.duragarages.com) and the most wonderful automotive posters and prints (www.historiccarart.net). The quality of the catering (lobster and Pommery champagne – all included in the £324 ticket) was entirely in keeping with the Salon Privé cars and luxury accessories.

Two unmissable events! **CS**

Past Master Ronnie Fox is the Motoring Correspondent of City Solicitor

ONE LAST WORD



STEPPING UP TO THE THRONE

In the dying days of 1936, Albert, Duke of York faced the daunting prospect of stepping up to become a King and Emperor.

At the start of the year, his elder brother acceded to the throne as King Edward VIII. It had only taken a few months for a constitutional crisis to develop. Edward was determined to marry Wallis Simpson, a twice-divorced American. Was it her marital status or nationality that the Establishment found the more objectionable?

Crisis or no crisis, the 'dignified' elements of the constitution had to continue. And, for a new King, this meant arranging a coronation.

As soon as the date was announced, plans were laid and manufacturers began to crank-out the ephemera that would mark the occasion.

There was just one problem. Everything was made in the dying months of 1936 and depicted a King who was about to abdicate. Outstanding orders were discretely cancelled. Items already produced were destroyed or hidden away. They were souvenirs for the coronation that never was.

But the date for the coronation was already in everyone's diary. So when the Duke of York stepped up to succeed his brother as George VI, he also took his coronation day.

CS

This article was provided courtesy of Ian Curry
www.vaguelyinteresting.co.uk



CS