

Tees Valley Law Society



Annual Review 2013

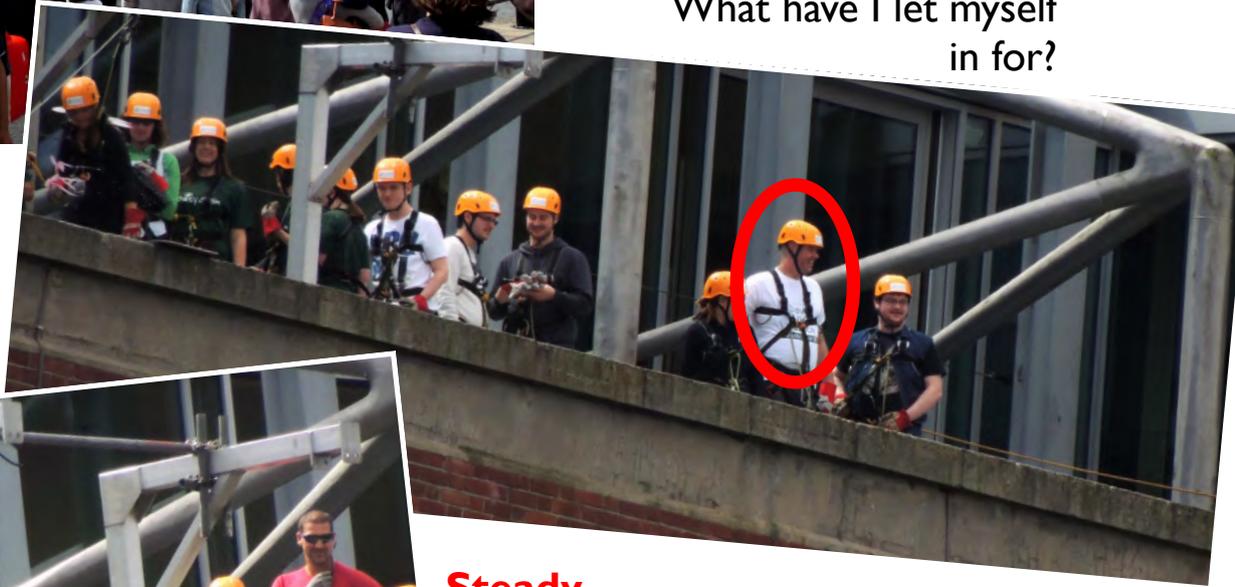
TVLS



The Baltic Flour Mill, on a sunny Sunday morning ... and our President jumps for Justice & Daisy Chain

Ready ...

What have I let myself in for?



Steady ...

Too late now to back out

GO GO GO!!



I did it!

WOW...

President's Report to the AGM 2 July 2013

It has been a great honour for me to represent the Society for the past year and to promote and support the work of the legal profession locally.

These are difficult times for the profession. Economic uncertainty, seemingly never ending regulation and government initiatives as well as austerity measures, add pressure and challenges to every branch of practice.

However, this Society has been in existence for 139 years, and has clearly seen very difficult times in the past. I feel that in such times the Society becomes an important focal point and a method of communication to those who come under our wing.

Part of my role has been to represent the society at a number of enjoyable official engagements, particularly in the first half of the year. It has been a great honour to be accepted as top table guest at some of these events and to mix with other professions and local societies. Sadly I could not attend the Sunderland Law Society Annual Dinner as it clashed with the Accountants Dinner, where I was expected to make a speech. These occasions include:

15 of July 2012

Durham Cathedral Matins for the North Eastern Courts of Justice

The sermon was given by then Bishop of Durham, Justin Welby, now Archbishop of Canterbury. Joining the procession through the Cathedral, with all of the pomp and ceremony and antiquated attire of the judges, is something I will never forget.



5 October 2012

The Insurance Institute of Middlesbrough Annual Dinner

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9 October 2012

I spoke to a bench of about 20 Judges in full regalia to welcome District Judge Andrew Meachin to the local bench.

14 October 2012

York Minster Matins and North Eastern Circuit Annual Service.

8 November 2012: The Newcastle upon Tyne Law Society Annual Dinner, at the Civic Centre.

16 November 2012

The Teesside Society of Chartered Accountants Annual Dinner.

More recently, the concern among the profession about the Coalition Government proposals for legal aid reform, has involved me in more active engagement with and on behalf of the profession. I have co-ordinated or attended meetings with local MPs and the Police and Crime Commissioner. I jointly hosted a meeting at Teesside Combined Court Centre with about 100 professionals to discuss the issues and agree a co-ordinated approach.

I have liaised with local media to ensure the issues achieve some local coverage in the press, as well as helping to set up a piece on the BBC



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Solicitors & Barristers gather at the station, ready to travel to London to attend the National Day of Action, 22 May 2013

North East Sunday Politics TV programme.

With a large group of local solicitors and barristers I attended the national day of action in London on 22 May 2013. I also attended the Ministry of Justice consultation event as well as the Law Society consultation event, both in Newcastle. I helped co-ordinate the



*“Minute of Unity” Solicitors & Barristers outside Teesside Combined Court Centre, 4 June 2013
Picture by courtesy of the Evening Gazette*

“minute of unity” outside Teesside Combined Court Centre on 4th June 2013.

I have again travelled to London on 26 June 2013 to lobby MPs in the House of Commons, the day before a debate in Parliament on the issue.

With the assistance of Helen Crute our Administrator I have circulated bulletins sharing information about the campaign, providing links to websites, the e-petition, and recommending action which the membership should take themselves to push the agenda forward.

10 & 11 May 2013

Presidents and Secretaries Annual Conference

I attended the Conference, held at Chancery Lane in London where I had the opportunity to meet senior members of the Society as well as contemporaries, and share ideas. It was also good to soak up the grandeur of our profession's headquarters.

The logo for TVLS, featuring the letters 'TVLS' in a stylized, handwritten font. The 'T' is black, the 'V' is blue, the 'L' is green, and the 'S' is black.

8 March 2013 Annual Dinner

The highlight of my year as President has definitely been the Annual Dinner at the Thistle Hotel on 8 March 2013. Nicola Neilson is invaluable as Dinner Secretary, and ensured the event was planned and executed to perfection. I genuinely felt that the event was a much needed opportunity for the profession to relax and enjoy the bond we



The President, HH Judge Matthews QC, and some of the guests

share. I am hugely grateful for the support we continue to receive from solicitors firms and barristers, not to mention judges, and I am pleased to say that the event is in good health. We also raised a very impressive £5,750 for my nominated charity Daisy Chain.



We can of course look to the future with confidence and with fresh ideas for our Society. Helen Crute is in the process of refreshing our website. We are looking to increase our social media presence through Facebook and LinkedIn. Our accounts suggest we are in good shape (thanks to the performance of our investments). However, our day to-day revenue account shows a deficit of over £3,000, therefore I hope we can perhaps invest in new ideas to increase our membership and relevance to the profession. I'm confident that with the ongoing work of our Administrator, Council members, the essential work of the Education and Training Committee, the newly created Junior Lawyers group, and not least of all our new President, Phil Mitchell, we can continue to honour the history as well as benefit the future of our local profession. I would like to thank Helen, our Council and Committee Members for their hard work and dedication to promoting and enhancing the work we do.



*Jonathan Woodhouse
PRESIDENT
July 2013*

Education And Training Committee

Chairman: Geoff Cruickshank

Co-ordinator: Geoffrey Crute

Education & Training Report for 2012

1. Breaking news – the Legal Education & Training Review

I reported last year about the progress of this major review, which should have reported in February. It was published on 25 June 2013. The principal findings in its 350 pages are set out in a separate summary which is distributed with the TVLS annual report, or available separately.

2. CPD Training Programme

Seminars held during the 2012 calendar year were supported as follows:

Date	Topic	Speaker	Booked	Attended
Feb 2012	Property Possession Pitfalls	Michelle Temple & Richard Stubbs (Trinity Chambers)	55	50
March 2012	Outcomes Focused Reglation	LBS Legal (Leeds)	45	41
May 2012	Contentions Probate & 1975 Act Claims	Constance McDonnell (3 Stone Buildings)	36	31
Sept 2012	Dispute Resolution	Anthony Glaister and experts panel	26	26
Oct 2012	Rights to Light	Philip Smith & Adrian Marston	20	19
Totals			182	167

The November 2012 event (being the first of the 2012/2013 season) was to have had a presentation by His Honour Retired Judge Peter Fox QC, but was cancelled “on the day” because of exceptionally inclement weather.

The logo for TVLS (The Law Society's Training and Continuing Professional Development) is displayed in a stylized, handwritten font. The letters 'T', 'V', and 'L' are in black, while the 'S' is in a light blue color.

The committee has considered the future of the present style of seminar in the light of variable responses during 2013, and “competition” from individual or in-house learning via webinars. As the Society’s target audience is general practice and smaller firms, it is recognised that that target audience is shrinking. The committee will be considering the fee levels for seminars, which have not altered for several years.

The Committee will also consider the LETR report and the SRA principles.

3. Committee Membership

Presently comprises Geoff Cruickshank (Chair), Geoffrey Crute (Co-ordinator), Andrew Dixon, Emma Kilburn, Helen Thomas, Nicola Neilson, and Lucy Adams; the President (ex officio); Adam Roberts and Metab Hussain (representing junior lawyers); Mark Simpson and Andrew Perriman (Teesside University School of Social Sciences and Law). Those interested in joining the committee should contact the co-ordinator.

4. Junior Lawyers

A successful and well-attended junior lawyers inaugural event was held in November, primarily to give new trainee lawyers the opportunity of meeting second year trainees and junior lawyers from other branches of the profession. Since then the group organising junior lawyers events have arranged two social events and four training workshops. The historic difficulties remain of identifying where potential trainees and junior lawyers are in all branches of the profession, and firms are urged to pass particulars of new recruits in their firms to the Administrator so that suitable invitations to membership can be issued.

5. In view – 2013-2014

Topics planned for the next 12 months include practical updating on civil costs following Jackson; a review of where we are in practical

The logo for TVLS, featuring the letters T, V, L, and S in a stylized, overlapping font. The 'V' is green, the 'L' is blue, and the 'S' is black. The 'T' is black and partially overlaps the 'V'.

terms on OFR, COLPs and COFAs; two updates on conveyancing practice – one covering up to date issues on fraud (from the Land Registry) and the other relating to the increasing range of information necessary in property transactions, presented by Northumbrian Water Property Solutions; and, subject to the relevant legislation being enacted in the early autumn, an account of significant changes in employment law and practise.

The committee is conscious of the need to provide seminars of broad appeal, practical bias, and topical importance. This requires a degree of forecasting and speculation to avoid the training plan being “last minute”, and to ensure that appropriate presenters are available. There is every indication that the SRA will review CPD provision in the light of the LETR proposition that “practitioners [will] have to plan, implement, evaluate and reflect annually on their training needs and their learning.” It will clearly assist the E & T Committee to produce a programme which supports lawyers in the Society’s area to be able to learn more of individuals’ training needs on a regular basis – and any requests for topics, or ideas on improved communication of needs, will be warmly welcomed.

*Geoffrey Crute
Co-ordinator
29 June 2013*

The logo for TVLS, featuring the letters T, V, L, and S in a stylized, handwritten font. The letter 'V' is highlighted in green and blue.

Public Relations report

We were sad to say goodbye to our Press Officer, Rachel Donald, in September when she moved to pastures new in London, but from what we hear, she is enjoying life in the City.

Emma Kilburn from Freers took over the role, and has had several articles in the local press.

However, Emma is now on maternity leave, so our President has stepped into the breach. He has become very involved with the MoJ Consultation “Transforming Legal Aid: Delivering a more credible and efficient system” and has generating several column inches on the subject.



He also is making the headlines himself, by deciding to leap off the Baltic building in Newcastle on Sunday 30 June. (see front and inside cover pages). As well as raising more money for Daisy Chain, he took the opportunity to promote the fight to Save UK Justice.

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Prize Giving

In 2012 the Society presented two prizes to trainees - the R T Richardson Prize and the new, Tees Valley Prize.

The R T Richardson Prize is awarded to the trainee who, in the opinion of the Council of Tees Valley Law Society, has demonstrated the best level of achievement in completing the Legal Practice Course which qualified him/her to enter into his/her training contract.

The Tees Valley Prize is awarded to the trainee who gained a distinction in his or her Legal Practice Course, and entered into a training contract with a solicitor in the Tees Valley Law Society area.

The prizes were awarded at the Pizza and Pasta evening in November for new and existing trainees, as well all as members of the Society.



Jonathan Woodhouse, President, presenting the R T Richardson prize to Samantha Kirby and the Tees Valley Prize to Tom Haigh

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Junior Lawyers Division

The JLD kicked-off with a workshop on "Networking", involving the JLD teaming up with Northern Chartered Accountant Student Society for a successful night of networking at Joe Rigatonis. There was around 23 in attendance.

The next event was a lasagne and quiz night at the Cross Keys in Yarm which was kindly sponsored by Wesleyan for Lawyers. Nineteen people attended and the night was a great success!

The most recent event was a comedy night and buffet which was held at the Arc. Unfortunately there were a fair few last minute drop-outs which resulted in eleven people in attendance. However, it was an enjoyable night none the less!

*Metab Hussain
June 2013*



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