

THE SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

(Constituted under the Solicitors Act 1974)

ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

for the year ended 30 April 2010

The Solicitors' Disciplinary Tribunal ("the SDT") was created by the Solicitors Act 1974 as a statutory Tribunal. The SDT is constituted with Solicitor members none of whom is a member of the Council of The Law Society and Lay members drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds. All Tribunal members are appointed by The Master of the Rolls following an open and transparent selection procedure. The Tribunal's procedures are governed by the Solicitors (Disciplinary Proceedings) Rules 2007 (S.I. No. 3588) which came into force on 14 January 2008.

Since the enactment of the Legal Services Act 2007 the Tribunal's administration and financial arrangements have been managed wholly independently from the Law Society. Its administration is run by Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal Administration Limited a company limited by guarantee controlled by the SDT.

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THE SOLICITORS DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL
constituted under the Solicitors Act 1974

TRIBUNAL

Mr. J. N. Barnecutt (President)

Mrs K. Todner
(Solicitor Vice President)

Mr. Ged Fisher
(Lay Vice President)

Solicitor Members

Mr. A. H. Isaacs, Mr. A. G. Gibson, Mr. R. B. Bamford, Mr. A. Gaynor-Smith, Mr. J. R. C. Clitheroe, Mr. D. J. Leverton, Mrs E. Stanley, Mr. J. C. Chesterton, Mr. A. G. Ground, Mr. R. J. C. Potter, Mr. A. N. Spooner, Mr. A. H. B. Holmes, Mr. W. M. Hartley, Mr. L. N. Gilford, Ms T Cullen, Mr. J. P. Davies, Mr. I. R. Woolfe, Mr. K. Duncan, Miss A. Banks, Miss J. Devonish, Mr. D. Green, Miss N. Lucking, Mr. D. Glass, Mr. E. Richards, Mrs J. Martineau, Mr. N. Pearson, Mr. D. Potts, Mr. M. Fanning, Mr. E. Nally, Mr. M. Sibley, Mr. R. Prigg, Mr. S. Tinkler, Mr. P. Housego, Mrs K. Thompson, Mr. R. Hegarty, Mr. C. Murray and Mr. J. Astle

Lay Members

Lady Bonham Carter, Mr. D. E. Marlow, Mr. M. Baughan, Mr. D. Gilbertson, Mr. M. G. Taylor, Mrs C. Pickering, Mrs V. Murray-Chandra, Mr. J. Jackson, Mrs S. Gordon, Mr. S. Howe, Mr. S. Marquez, Mr. P. Wyatt, Mrs N. Chavda, Mr. M. Palayiwa, Mr. M. Hallam, Mrs L. Barnett, Mr. S. Hill, Mr. R. Slack and Mrs L. McMahon-Hathway

Clerk

Mrs S. C. Elson, MBE, Solicitor

Deputy Clerks

Mrs S. Whitfield, Solicitor

Mrs R James Solicitor

Ms L Shuja Solicitor

Mrs L. Cartright, Solicitor

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President's Introduction

This has been in many ways a challenging year for the Tribunal. With the implementation of the Legal Services Act the way in which the Tribunal is funded has changed. A company limited by guarantee, Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal Administration Ltd, (SDTA Ltd.) is responsible for the administration of the Tribunal, including setting its budgets and handling its finances. The Board of that Company is made up of the Tribunal's president who is chairman of the Board, the lay and solicitor vice presidents, a non executive director and currently the immediate past president. Board meetings are held regularly and are attended by the Clerk to the Tribunal (also Company Secretary), its operations manager and its finance officer.

The Legal Services Act provides that the Tribunal is to formulate its budget requirements for an ensuing calendar year and such budget shall be approved by the Legal Services Board which shall require The Law Society to pay the required amount to SDTA Ltd. The detailed procedure to be adopted is to be the subject of a Memorandum of Understanding agreed between the parties involved in the process.

During the year under review Karen Todner was elected as solicitor vice president and Michael Baughan resigned as lay vice president. I express my considerable thanks to him as lay vice president. Following an election in which the members of the Tribunal participated Ged Fisher was appointed as the new lay vice president.

The staff, who were formerly employed by the Law Society, became employees of SDTA Ltd. TUPE applied to the transfer of staff and the required consultation and other formalities were properly observed.

During the year under review the Board reviewed the Tribunal's level of staffing and vacancies were filled and additional staff were engaged which addressed a number of problems caused by inadequate staffing. The Tribunal with regret accepted Sheila Whitfield's resignation as deputy clerk owing to her ill health and acknowledges with thanks her great efforts over 11 years in that capacity.

Susan Elson confirmed that she would retire as the Tribunal's clerk at the end of October 2010 and the Tribunal thanks her for acting in that capacity for over twenty years.

SDTA Ltd has conducted a recruitment of new staff, including a new Clerk, and suitable persons have been appointed and will be in place during the summer of 2010.

The deputy clerks and the administrative staff have worked very hard taking on both the additional work dictated by changes in funding arrangements and management and operational difficulties resulting from staff shortages and the volume and nature of the Tribunal's work.

Concerns about delays in the production of written findings have been addressed and the situation is now much improved. A working party undertook a review of the

form of the findings and its recommendations have been adopted. The working party is to be thanked for its work in this connection.

Also during the year under review SDTA Ltd recognised that it was necessary to recruit both solicitor and lay new members of the Tribunal. Following an open and transparent competition 11 solicitor and 6 lay members were recommended to the Master of the Rolls and were duly appointed as members.

Alan Ground, John Clitheroe and John Potter retired as members of the Tribunal during the year under review. I express gratitude for their public spirited and effective contribution to the work of the Tribunal over a number of years and congratulate John Potter on his appointment to the circuit bench.

It is anticipated that there will be a number of members retiring from membership of the Tribunal in 2010.

The Tribunal was pleased that the judgment in *Viridi v The Law Society & The Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal* [2010] EWCA Civ 100 endorsed the way in which the Tribunal produces its Findings/Decisions.

The Tribunal is in a good position to meet the challenges that it faces in the coming year. These will include the consideration of appeals from those subject to disciplinary decisions taken by the Solicitors Regulation Authority under the powers granted to it by the Legal Services Act. The need for changes to the Tribunal's Rules of Procedure in light of these matters is under review.

Jeremy Barnecutt

A Lay View

Having been a lay member of the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal since 2006, I am pleased to have been asked to provide this year's 'Lay View'. I would like to begin by relating one of the main reasons I applied to become a member of the Tribunal.

The majority of private individuals who require the services of a solicitor have little information regarding the basis on which they should select one and often their need for the services of a solicitor is at a time of personal stress. The result of this is that the selection is done by some vague recollection of the name of a firm of solicitors used by their family some decades previously or just by selecting from an internet search or the brass plates on the High Street. For this reason it is vital that any person describing themselves as a 'solicitor' maintains the highest standards of honesty, probity, trustworthiness and integrity so that a member of the public can be assured that, however they select their solicitor, they can be confident that these standards will be maintained. The Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal is an important part of maintaining these standards by ensuring that those solicitors who are found to have contravened the rules are dealt with in an appropriate way which may not only punish them but also protect the public and reinforce the importance of the rules to the profession as a whole. I believe that the combination of two solicitor members and a lay member on the tribunal gives a good balance of knowledge of the profession combined with the expectations of the general public.

I could not let this opportunity pass without congratulating all the staff on their continued professionalism and good humour during a challenging year. Not only have the members received good service and support when sitting but, from my observation, all parties who attend the tribunal are treated in an exemplary fashion by all of the staff.

The current high standards maintained by the Tribunal have been achieved under the excellent guidance of Sue Elson, Clerk to the Tribunal, who will be retiring this year after 20 years in the role. With the possibility of one exception, she will have welcomed all of the current Lay Members to their role on the Tribunal and we wish her well for the next stage in her very full life. We also welcome Sue Elson's successor Susan Humble and look forward to working with her in the future

Stephen Howe

APPLICATIONS

Hearings and Summary of Decisions

During the year under review the Tribunal sat on 232 hearing days (226 in the previous year).

During the period under review the following applications were received.

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	To 30/4/10	To 30/4/09
Number of applications* involving practising solicitors – relating to 361 (417) solicitors, 12 (10) registered foreign lawyers and 5 (1) recognised bodies	249	247
Number of applications* in respect of solicitors' clerks – Relating to 13 (10) clerks, 7 clerks were included in applications against solicitors – a total of 20 clerks)	12	10
Number of applications for restoration to the Roll	2	4
Number of applications to revoke, quash, review or vary an Order under s.43 made either by the Tribunal or the SRA	4	3
Number of applications seeking determination of an indefinite period of suspension	4	3
Number of applications made in respect of former solicitors (i.e. no longer on the Roll)	2	1
TOTAL	273	268

*It should be noted that one application may be in respect of two or more solicitors or clerks. Previous year's figures appear in brackets.

Section 43 (as amended by the Legal Services Act 2007) applies to those who are not admitted solicitors and who are employed or remunerated by solicitors.

An Order made pursuant to s.43 of the Solicitors Act 1974 (as amended) prevents a solicitor from employing the person to whom the Order relates without the consent of The Law Society.

The total number of applications received during the year under review (compared with those received in previous years) and the number of sitting days were as follows:

Year ending 30th April	No. Of applications	No. Of sitting days
2006	212	136
2007	249	178
2008	262	169
2009	268	226
2010	273	232

Of the applications made in the year ending 30th April 2010, six were made directly by members of the public. No case to answer was established in respect of five of them, in one case a prima facie case was found and the matter is awaiting a substantive hearing date. Applications for Restoration to the Roll, for determination of an indefinite suspension or the revocation of a s.43 Order accounted for 10 matters. The balance was made up of applications by The Law Society (through the Solicitors Regulation Authority). Two Law Society applications were withdrawn with the consent of the Law Society.

SUMMARY OF ORDERS

Orders made by the Tribunal during the period under review are listed below. It should be noted that a distinction must be made between applications received and Orders made. A number of Orders made relate to applications made prior to the year under review and the Tribunal will determine a number of applications made in this year in its next year.

An overview of Orders made in respect of solicitors in the last six years is shown in the table below.

Year end 30 April	Number of Strike Offs	Suspensions	Fines	Reprimands	No Order, costs only Order or case dismissed
2005	54	42	79	17	12
2006	63	39	64	16	10
2007	67	33	86	20	6
2008	61	47	110	37	15
2009	57	37	122	55	15
2010	84	44	172	49	15

OTHER ORDERS

(Figures in brackets relate to the year 2008/09)

- A. There were 12 cases in which an Order for costs only was made (7).
- B. There were no cases in which the Tribunal found none of the allegations to have been substantiated (5).
- C. The Tribunal considered no applications for restoration to the Roll (2).

- D. Orders were made pursuant to Section 43 of the Solicitors Act 1974 in respect of 23 clerks (16).
- E. There was 1 application for revocation or review of a Section 43 Order (1), which was refused.
- F. Orders prohibiting restoration to the Roll without the consent of the Tribunal were made in respect of 2 former solicitors (1).
- G. 2 applications were made to determine a period of indefinite suspension (1), one of which was granted and one was refused.
- H. In 5 cases a Direction made by the Solicitors Regulation Authority was ordered to be treated as an Order of the High Court for the purposes of enforcement (14).
- I. 2 applications were withdrawn (3). (An application may not be withdrawn without the consent of the Tribunal.)

Appeals

During the year there were 16 Appeals heard against findings of the Tribunal. Nine were dismissed, three were allowed, one was partly upheld and one was withdrawn. One matter went to the Court of Appeal (referred to in the President's Introduction). 10 appeals lodged are currently awaiting a hearing.

SOLICITORS' EMPLOYEES

The table below shows an overview of the Orders made by the Tribunal in respect of solicitors' employees (including applications for revocation of Section 43 Order) for the last six years.

2005	15
2006	8
2007	19
2008	17
2009	19
2010	24

THE COST OF RUNNING THE TRIBUNAL

The costs of the Tribunal according to figures supplied by The Law Society have over the recent past been as follows:

Calendar Year	Total £'000	Annual cost per practising solicitor £
2004	800	8.00
2005	863	8.63
2006	1.009	8.77
2007	1.049	9.12
2008*	1,193	10.37
2009*	1,918	16.67

For 2004 – 2005 the annual cost is based on an average of 100,000 practising solicitors. The number of Practising Certificates issued by The Law Society for the year to November 2006 was approximately 115,000 and the annual cost per practising solicitor is based on this figure for the years 2006 to 2009.

The Lay members hitherto have been remunerated by the Ministry of Justice (formerly the Department of Constitutional Affairs) which has also been responsible for their expenses (approx £80,000 for the calendar year ended 31st December 2009) (£75,000 for calendar year ended 31st December 2008). From 1st July 2008 solicitor members have been remunerated from Tribunal funds. As a result of legislation the remuneration and expenses of lay members has become the responsibility of the Tribunal from 1st January 2010.

The cost of running the Tribunal has in the past been ascertained from figures supplied by The Law Society. Salaries, staff costs and administration expenses and costs of the Tribunal's Court Rooms and offices were charged as direct expenses to which an overhead element was added.

* Since 1st July 2008 and for subsequent years the Tribunal is responsible for all its administrative costs within a budget approved by the Legal Services Board. The 2008 costs were partly under the former Law Society regime and partly under the new Tribunal regime and comparison with earlier years is therefore not consistent. The figures quoted in the table for 2008 are estimated.

Accounts for the year to 31 December 2009

	Expenditure for year to 31 December 2009	Budget 2010 approved by the Legal Services Board
Staff salary and related costs		
Salaries, NIC, pension	360,893	490,887
Employers NI & Pension costs and Group Finance	214,020	214,197
Other staff costs	78,759	50,000
General administration costs		
Printing, stationery	16,434	30,000
Postage, Courier	21,737	30,000
Solicitor & Lay members remuneration	428,438	522,900
Solicitor & Lay members expenses	75,872	142,500
HR and related costs	78,816	22,600
IT support & website (for 2010)	49,594	52,790
Catering	11,729	15,000
Legal fees	54,961	40,000
Financial controller/audit	34,401	34,000
AGM/Training Days/Bo Meetings		34901
Exc.Secretarial expenses		15,000
Other (inc contingency for 2010)		66,100
Building costs		
Rent, rates, service charge	321,114	308,265
Group facilities inc insurances	20,962	35,000
Maintenance/Other	31,455	34,504
Irrecoverable VAT	118,658	100,000
Total	1,917,843	2,238,644

THE MEMBERS OF THE TRIBUNAL

The following Solicitor and lay members were re-appointed by the Master of the Rolls at the end of the year under review: Mr. Anthony Gibson, Mr. Peter Davies, Lady Bonham Carter, Mr. David Marlow, Mrs Caroline Pickering and Mr. Michael Taylor.

The following solicitor members have retired from the Tribunal: Mr. Alan Ground, Mr. John Clitheroe and Mr. John Potter.

Brief biographical details of the members of the Tribunal who served during the year under review appear on pages 21 to 32 of this report.

Brief biographical details of the current members of the Tribunal staff appear on pages 33 and 34 of this report.

Explanation and Details of some aspects of the Tribunal's work

Speed of Process and Duration of cases

1 So far as the Tribunal is concerned, a case starts with the lodgement of an application and a Statement now made under Rule 5 of the 2007 Rules delivered by the Applicant to the Tribunal. The matter is then considered to determine whether a case to answer is made out. Thereafter the statement is served on the Respondent by the Tribunal when the Respondent is given under the Rules at least six weeks' notice of a pre-listing day when the parties are requested to indicate whether or not the allegations are admitted and the anticipated length of hearing and dates to avoid. A hearing date is fixed on or after the pre-listing day.

2. A survey of all cases heard substantively during the period under review shows that 14 per cent were concluded within six months of being filed with the Tribunal. A further 61 per cent were concluded between six months and one year. The Tribunal's written Order is handed down at the conclusion of the hearing.

45 cases were outstanding for more than one year (29 cases at the end of the previous year). An earlier substantive hearing was not achieved for a number of reasons including preliminary procedural and human rights challenges, the issuance of one or more supplementary statements adding to the allegations already made; the ill health of the Respondent or parallel proceedings either in the criminal or civil courts where it would be inappropriate to proceed with the disciplinary hearing until the conclusion of those parallel proceedings.

Some cases may be delayed because the applicant or respondent (or both) are not ready to proceed, most often in cases where the allegations are not admitted or, for example, a further disclosure of documents is necessary.

3. Time limits apply for the service of notices under the Civil Evidence Act and in connection with other procedural matters. The Tribunal expedites cases if the parties seek an early hearing.

4. The hearing date for a case estimated by the parties to be lengthy (extending over more than one day) will depend on the availability of the parties, advocates, witnesses and Tribunal Members and whether or not other cases have been listed requiring courtroom accommodation and the services of a Clerk. The Tribunal has seen an increase in the length and complexity of cases. There have been a number of matters where preliminary issues have had to be resolved, for example issues of legal professional privilege, claims of unreasonable delay in bringing the matter to the Tribunal, and whether a hearing should take place in private.

5. 76 cases took one day or more to reach the conclusion of the substantive hearing. Of these, 57 cases took one day, 10 cases took two days, 4 cases took three days, 2 cases took 4 days, 2 case took 5 days and 1 case took 29 days. These more lengthy cases took up 131 (56%) sitting days compared to 151 (67%) in the previous year. The Tribunal often sits from 9.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. or later to ensure the timely conclusion of matters.

The Tribunal's procedures are governed by the Solicitors (Disciplinary Proceedings) Rules 2007 (S.I. 3588).

ANALYSIS OF SUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SOLICITORS DURING THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

Allegations may be framed in different ways and the analysis has been based on the allegations as framed which have been categorised in seven groups. Spread across the categories below dishonesty and/or a failure to exercise probity, integrity and trustworthiness was found in 21% of cases (19% last year).

SOLICITORS

The allegations were broken down into the following groups:

A CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

B SOLICITORS ACCOUNTS RULES BREACHES

C CLIENTS MONEY improper utilisation
misappropriation

D FAILURES failure to pay counsel's/agent's fees
failure to comply with undertaking
failure to comply with OSS direction/resolution
failure to account
failure to provide costs information
failure to supervise
failure to comply with Solicitors Separate Business
Code
failure to respond to OSS/others
failure to comply with Solicitors Indemnity Rules

E BREACHES breach of duty to the court/misleading the court
breach of s.34 Solicitors Act 1974 (Accountant's
Reports)
breach of condition on Practising Certificate
breach of Solicitors Practice Rules
breach of duty of good faith to others/OSS
breach of professional duty (failure to disclose)
breach of restriction on employment of struck
off/suspended solicitor
breach of Legal Aid Regulations
breach of Solicitors Introduction & Referral Code
1990
breach of Solicitors Publicity Code 1990 & 2001

F DELAYS

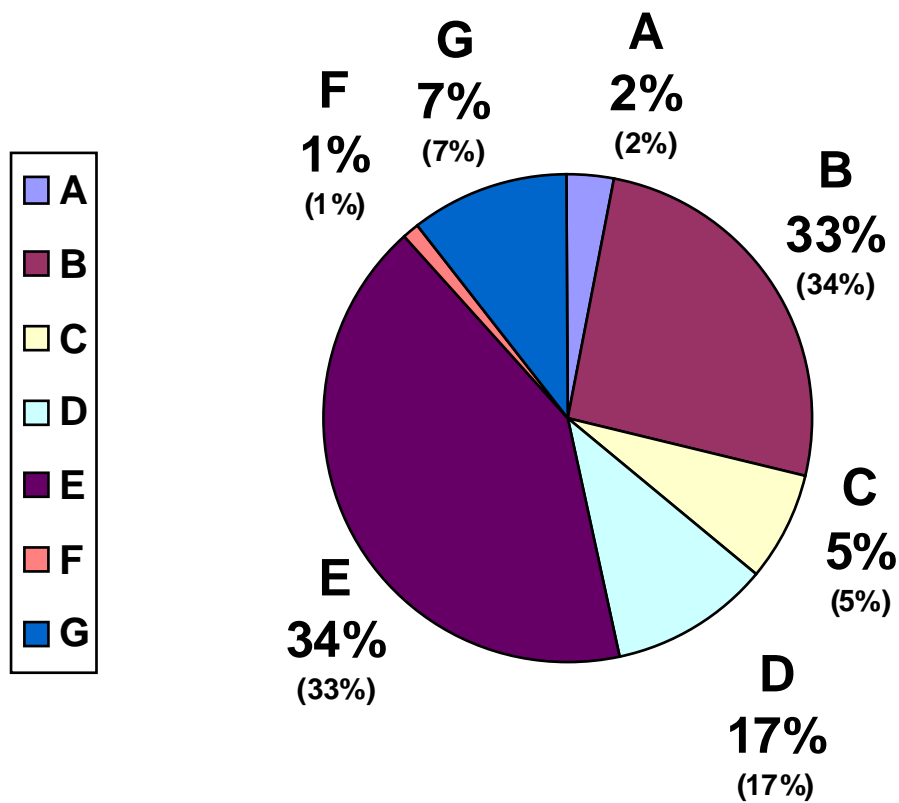
delay in delivery of papers
delay in professional business

G OTHER

Includes:

making false documents
no Practising Certificate
conflict of interest
costs not justified (overcharging)
abandonment of practice

(2008/09 figures in brackets)



Solicitors struck off the Roll

84 Solicitors were struck off the Roll in the year under review. Examples of conduct leading to a striking off were where:-

- Respondents were found dishonestly to have misappropriated clients' money
- Respondents had a criminal conviction
- Respondents charged success fees in circumstances where the Tribunal found it was improper to do so.
- Respondents grossly misled clients
- Respondents failed to discharge their professional duties honestly and reliably

A solicitor who did not cooperate with the regulator; practised uncertificated, dishonestly and untruthfully claimed to be VAT registered, did not carry indemnity insurance, failed to comply with a county court judgement and failed to account to a client was struck off the Roll.

In another case a solicitor dishonestly used clients' funds to purchase a property for his wife. He was struck off.

Suspension from practice

20 Solicitors were suspended indefinitely

13 Solicitors were suspended for one year or more

11 Solicitors were suspended for less than one year

These are cases where the solicitor's offences were very serious but not considered sufficient to justify permanent removal of a right to practise. Included in such cases are those where the Respondent suffers from a serious illness affecting his ability properly to serve his clients. In the case of an indefinite suspension, the solicitor may apply for the period of suspension to be brought to an end when he would have to show that he is fit to be a solicitor.

Where a solicitor who had delayed in the administration of a deceased's estate, had misled his managing partner about this and had "backdated" letters to give the impression that they had been sent out earlier than they were, the Tribunal did not underestimate the seriousness of his conduct but took into account the solicitor's very difficult circumstances and imposed an indefinite period of suspension.

A solicitor who acted seriously in breach of the Solicitors Accounts Rules including making incorrect postings and other mistakes in maintaining a long-term suspense account so that there appears to be a substantial shortage on client account, which he attempted to address by a weekly standing order transferring money from his office account to his client account – but did not identify and rectify errors promptly. The solicitor had also transferred costs where no bill had been delivered to the client and had been in dispute with another client account the level of his fees about which he accepted he had not given an indication of his likely ultimate fees. The solicitor was suspended from practice for five years, the Tribunal having found the breaches to have been serious but not having found that the solicitor had been dishonest.

Fines

172 solicitors were subject to Orders imposing fines upon them. Fines ranged from £500 to £25,000

Fines are payable to H.M. Treasury and totalled in the year under review £862,250 (£762,500 in the previous year)

Fines can be imposed in a wide variety of cases. Under the Legal Services Act 2007, the limit on the amount of fine which may be imposed by the Tribunal has been lifted.

A solicitor who did not produce his books of account to the regulator for inspection and who failed to cooperate with the regulator's offices and who had accepted a personal loan of £23,000 from a client whom he had told to take independent advice about this, but she did not do so, was fined £15,000.

Reprimand

49 solicitors were reprimanded.

A solicitor who was acting in matrimonial ancillary proceedings did not respond to urgent requests for information from the other side and claimed that he had taken some compassionate leave – the reasons for which were rejected by the “other side”. The solicitor did not respond to the regulator's enquiries about this. Despite being granted an extension of time, the solicitor did not file his statutory annual Accountant's report on time. The Solicitor was not a young man and did not enjoy good health. He undertook to the Tribunal not to practise again as a solicitor. The Tribunal imposed a reprimand upon him.

Restoration to the Roll

The Tribunal considered no applications for restoration to the Roll.

It is unusual for an application for restoration to the Roll to be successful. Where the strike off Order was made in respect of dishonesty on the part of a solicitor, he faces an almost insurmountable obstacle to his restoration to the Roll.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Solicitor Members

James Astle

Member of Tribunal since 2009.

Admitted as a solicitor in 1977.

Assistant Solicitor planning and highways law Leicestershire County Council 1977/8. Prosecuting Solicitor Thames Valley Police Authority 1978/9.

Solicitor and partner (1982) Darbys Solicitors LLP, Oxford, 1980 to date.

Practice includes town and country planning, licensing, regulatory/discipline & crime.

Head of crime team since 1988. Duty Solicitor & Higher Courts Advocate (Crime).

Deputy District Judge (Magistrates' Court) since 2000. Deputy Traffic

Commissioner since 2008.

Richard B. Bamford

Member of Tribunal since 1984.

Admitted in 1964. Joined present Cambridgeshire private client practice in 1965; partner 1966; senior partner 1989 to 2005 now a consultant to this firm. 50% of time since 1987 spent on administration and legal aspects of (inter alia) navigation on the River Cam and flood defence and land drainage for the Fens area around Ely otherwise trust and property matters.

Miss Alison Banks

Member of Tribunal since 2006. Admitted in 1993.

Previously partner in High Street practice specialising in personal injury and general litigation now concentrating exclusively on criminal defence litigation. Duty Solicitor.

Jeremy N. Barnecutt (President)

Member of Tribunal since 1994.

Admitted in 1976. Partner in a London firm specialising in Chancery litigation, contentious and non-contentious probate work.

J. Colin Chesterton

Member of Tribunal since 1994.

Admitted in 1980.

Consultant in a firm in Devon, Somerset and Dubai

Until 2009 general High Street practice. Work now almost exclusively Deputyships in the Court of Protection for serious head injury clients though some CSA appeals and welfare benefits.

John R. C. Clitheroe

Member of Tribunal since 1992.

Admitted in 1959 specialising in criminal and commercial litigation. A former senior partner, of a London firm.

Advised solicitors, accountants and medical professions in ethical regulatory and disciplinary matters since 1962.

Past member of Law Society Criminal Law Committee.

Member General Professional Programme Committee of the International Bar Association.

Miss Teresa Cullen

Member of Tribunal since 1999.

Admitted in 1983. A partner in a West End firm. Specialises in Matrimonial/litigation. Family mediator (Resolution), Civil and Commercial Law Mediator (ADR Group). Assessor on Family Law Panel; In practice for over 20 years. Member of The Law Society Family Law Panel (Advanced).

J. Peter Davies

Member of Tribunal since 2001.

Admitted as a Solicitor 1981. A partner in firms in London and Cardiff until 1998 when he set up niche litigation practice in Cardiff specialising in professional negligence and personal injury work: Deputy District Judge since 1992. President Adjudication Panel for Wales.

Miss Jacqueline Devonish

Member of the Tribunal since 2006.

Admitted in 1991. Private practice in London since qualification. Two partnerships since 1994 as a "High Street" practitioner in general civil litigation, family, wills, education and conveyancing. Chair of Governors to a primary school, Governing Body Clerk for London Borough of Brent, and Independent Appeal Panel Clerk for the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham. More recently prosecuting for the government agency VOSA. Also a member of the CIPFA quality assurance panel'.

Ken Duncan

Member of Tribunal since 2006.

Admitted in 1971. Partner in a City firm from 1977 to date. Specialises in Property litigation.

Deputy District Judge since August 2000.

Michael Fanning

Member of Tribunal since 2009.

“Admitted in 1993, a sole practitioner solicitor-advocate (criminal courts) based in the Lake District and specializing in criminal litigation. Sits as a Deputy District Judge (Magistrates Courts).”

Adrian Gaynor-Smith

Member of Tribunal since 1984.

Admitted in 1963. Private practice in Malvern from 1965 in partnership with his wife and others. Now semi-retired working as consultant to their former practice. Has undertaken contentious and commercial work, commercial conveyancing and advocacy. Has also undertaken part-time judicial appointments in Welfare Benefits Law, Coroners Courts, Disciplinary Appeals Tribunal (Certified Accountants) and Deputy District Judge. Currently acts as a local conciliation officer when called on.

Anthony G. Gibson

Member of Tribunal since 1980.

Admitted in 1965. Partner in a six partner family practice in Newcastle established in 1720. President of Newcastle Incorporated Law Society 1989-90. Practises mainly in family law, commercial conveyancing and trusts. Member of STEP.

Laurence N. Gilford

Member of Tribunal since 1999.

Admitted in 1973. Specialising in civil/commercial Litigation. In partnership in total of four central London/City firms since 1976.

Appointed Deputy District Judge in December 1991.

David Glass

Member of Tribunal since 2006.

Admitted in 1969. Partner in Cheltenham firm 1973 – 2006, now consultant with same firm. Specialised in litigation and family work. Deputy District Judge since 1999. Member Legal Services Consultative Panel. Treasurer Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Law Society.

Dominic Green

Member of Tribunal since 2006.

Admitted in 1993. Partner in Westminster firm, specialising in media related disputes, intellectual property litigation and defamation. Previously Head of Media and Entertainment in Soho W1 firm and partner for 5 years in music and media practice in Covent Garden, WC2.

Alan G. Ground

Member of Tribunal since 1996.

Admitted in 1962. Partner in a City firm from 1969, Leader, commercial, competition, and EU Law Groups 1983 -1994. Law Society International Committee 1983-1992, Human Rights Working Party 1988-1992. Director, Eurostar 1994-1997.

William M. Hartley

Member of Tribunal since 1999.

Admitted in 1970. Partner in a Manchester firm for 27 years specialising in non-contentious work. Former member of STEP.

Author of the first six editions of "Matrimonial Conveyancing", first edition of "Declarations of Trust" and contributor to Readers' Digest "Know Your Rights". Last Chairman of the High Peak Division (Buxton) of the General Commissioners for Income Tax. Recent author of a business history "An Oldham Velvet Dynasty" (2009).

Richard Hegarty

Member of Tribunal since 2009.

Admitted 1974. Senior Partner of Peterbrough firm. Specialises in commercial property and solicitor regulation, expert witness for prosecuting authorities in relation to property related fraud and money laundering.

A. H. Boyd Holmes

Member of Tribunal since 1999.

Admitted in 1976.

Managing partner of a Carlisle firm, since 1989: undertakes property & trusts work. Member of STEP; member of CLARITY; interest in management.

Paul Housego

Member of Tribunal since 2009.

Trained in the City after Cambridge, and then moved to Devon where he has been at the same practice for many years undertaking a variety of work. He has been senior partner there for the last 10 years or so. He now specialises in employment work for clients all over the country, and has sat as an Employment Judge since 1992. In addition to sitting on the SDT he is also a chair of the Professional Conduct Committee of the Architects Registration Board.

Anthony H. Isaacs

Member of the Tribunal since 1988. Admitted 1960. Partner in City firm 1964. Senior Partner 1987-1996. Specialised in Company and Commercial law. Member of Company Law Committee. DTI Inspector. Nominated (i.e. independent) Member of the Council of Lloyds 1993-1999. Chairman of Lloyds' Investigations Committee 1994-2000.

David J. Leverton

Member of Tribunal since 1992.

Admitted in 1958. Largely retired from his former firm but remains in practice carrying out consultancy work. Former Managing Partner of a Lincoln's Inn firm. Senior litigation lawyer in the practice: wide cross-section of litigation experience before becoming a family law specialist twenty five years ago. Wide experience of proceedings in Court and before tribunals: one of the original members of the former standing committee set up by The Law Society and the Court of Protection to advise on changes in procedure and the conduct of business in that Court.

Miss Nicola Lucking

Member of Tribunal since 2006.

Admitted in 1974. Partner since 1981 with country practice based in the Norfolk Broads. Specialises in commercial and residential property work. Special interest in social housing. Director of St. Matthew Housing and Circle Anglia and Chair of Wherry Housing Association. Member of the Corporation of Paston College.

Mrs Jane Martineau

Member of Tribunal since 2006.

Admitted in 1974. Expertise in the fields of insurance, professional indemnity and shipping disputes. A trained mediator and member of ADR Chambers UK.

Edward Nally

Member since 2009.

Senior Partner of Fieldings Porter Solicitors of Bolton, a large regional firm where he specialises in Commercial Property and Charity Law.

President of The Law Society of England and Wales from 2004 – 2005, having previously chaired the Main Board and Standards Board of The Law Society.

Chaired the Regulation Working Party set up as a special task force to review the Rules of Conduct of Solicitors. The fruit of that work was the Solicitors Code of Conduct 2007. Judicial Appointments Commissioner and a Governor of The College of Law. Council Member of The International Bar Association and a Member of The IBA Management Board. Lectured widely on a range of professional and practice matters.

Richard Nicholas

Member of Tribunal since 2006.

Admitted in 1979. Partner in Merseyside firm. Senior Partner since 1989. Specialises in mental health and human rights work. LSC Pier Reviewer and part time President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal.

Nicholas Pearson

Member of Tribunal since 2006.

Admitted in 1976. After training and working for 3 years with a leading City litigation practice, worked for over 25 years with a large firm of international lawyers firstly in Hong Kong for 9 years before returning to London in 1988, from where he managed his firm's global dispute resolution practice. Main areas of contentious work include commercial, company, fraud, trusts and insolvency. Chaired his firm's global professional responsibility and practice committee. Retired from the firm at the end of 2006.

R. John C. Potter

Member of Tribunal since 1997. Admitted in July 1987.

Higher Rights of Audience July 1999.

A partner in a Legal Aid franchised Manchester firm. Exclusively undertakes defence criminal litigation. Duty solicitor. Past President of the Manchester Law Society and continues to be a Council Member of the Manchester Law Society. Represents the local Law Society on the local user committees of the Magistrates' Court and the Crown Court.

David Potts

Member of Tribunal since 2006.

Admitted in 1977. A consultant Solicitor in active legal practice, specialising in Real Property Litigation, in a regional commercial firm with offices in Nottingham, Birmingham and London. Previously a partner in two practices and for a number of years an in-house solicitor. Broad overall experience of civil and criminal litigation and also non-contentious work. Experience as a partner of practice management. Since 1999 a County Court Deputy District Judge. In 2006 appointed Solicitor Advocate (Higher Courts Civil Proceedings).

Robert Prigg

Member of Tribunal since 2009.

Admitted 1995.

Solicitor in a four partner high street practice, specialising in Family and Civil Litigation. Member of the Law Society's Advanced Family Law Panel, a Family Law Peer Reviewer for the Legal Services Commission and sits as a Deputy District Judge (Civil) on the Midlands Circuit. He is also a Governor of his children's school.

Edward Richards

Member of Tribunal since 2006.

Admitted 1993. Litigation partner in west country firm since 1996. Undertakes a range of civil litigation work. Member of the Personal Injury Panel. DELS Mediator. Notary Public.

Matthew Sibley

Member of Tribunal since 2009.

Admitted 1992.

Consultant in a firm in Sheffield, London and Brussels. Specialised in corporate bank matters, development and property finance and project finance. A Lay Chair for the Yorkshire NHS Post Graduate Deanery and business advisor to Sheffield County Council.

Andrew N. Spooner

Member of Tribunal since 1999.

Admitted in 1978. Former Head of Commercial Litigation at a Birmingham firm and member of its Management Board. Specialises in major commercial disputes and now works as a specialist litigation consultant to a niche employment law practice. Member of the Association of Midlands Mediators. Deputy District Judge.

Mrs Elodie Stanley

Member of the Tribunal since 1994.

Admitted in 1980. In partnership in three central London firms since 1983. Deals with all aspects of property law residential and commercial and specialises in leasehold reform and enfranchisement.

Simon Tinkler

Member of Tribunal since 2009. Admitted in 1993. Partner in major international law firm since 2000, specialising in transaction private equity work and M&A. Elected as managing partner of corporate practice in London in 2010.

Karen Thompson

Member of tribunal since 2009. Admitted in 1987. Private practice in Westminster firm until relocating to Dorset in 1991. Partner in large regional firm since 1994 specialising in personal injury and clinical negligence. Now fulltime Compliance and Risk Partner with emphasis on regulatory work. Also had earlier career as a nurse.

Mrs Karen Todner (Solicitor Vice President)

Member of Tribunal since 2002.

Admitted in 1987. Senior Partner in Criminal and Mental Health Practice, established in 1990. Duty Solicitor. Member of Serious Fraud Panel. Member of London Criminal Court Solicitors Association and Criminal Law Society Solicitors Association. President of Mental Health Review Tribunals.

Roger Woolfe

Member of Tribunal since 2002.

Admitted in 1970. Partner in Holborn firm since 1971. Senior Partner since 1994. Specialises in commercial property work. Particular interest in rules and ethics of the solicitors' profession as Committee Member of City of Westminster and Holborn Law Society.

Lay Members

Michael C. Baughan

Member of Tribunal since 1990.

Retired from Lazards where he was a Managing Director from 1986 to 1999: Governor of Westminster School, Governor of Haberdashers' Aske's Federation. Consultant to Penfida LLP.

Lucinda Barnett

Member of Tribunal since 2009.

Qualified as teacher, former Civil Servant. JP since 1986 (adult, youth and family courts). Deputy chairman, then Chairman, Magistrates' Association, 2002 – 2008; member (in the latter role) of the Judges' Council and its Executive Committee, Magisterial Committee of the Judicial Studies Board, joint chairman of the National Sentencer/Probation Forum. Appointed independent member, Parole Board 2010. School governor for 12 years, chairman of governors 2000 – 2005. Independent Monitoring Board member for nine years – chairman of Board, HMP Downview, 1997 – 2000. Committee experience:- Area Child Protection, South East London Probation, Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee.

Lady Bonham Carter

Member of Tribunal since 1980.

Born and raised in USA until came to the UK as a teenager.

Served as a JP in Greenwich and Woolwich from 1966 -1990.

A member of the Immigration Appeals Tribunal 1970 - 2002.

Mrs Nalini Chavda

Member of Tribunal since 2006.

35 years business experience gained from Department of Work and Pensions as a Senior Executive Officer.

Successful completion of two high profile secondments, BBC Coventry and Warwickshire Radio and Training Enterprise Council.

Wide experience in Diversity, Disability, Tribunal and Court work.

Justice of the Peace since 1989.

Member of the Employment Tribunal since 1999.

Member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Disciplinary Committee since 2007.

Appointed as Lay Race Assessor to the County Courts in 2009

Member of Nursing & Midwifery Council Fitness to Practice Committee in 2009.

Gerald Fisher (Lay Vice President)

Member of Tribunal since 1999.

35 years experience in Personnel work in industry, finally as Group Personnel Director of a FTSE 100 Company.

Currently a member of Employment Tribunals, the Central Arbitration Committee and the Disciplinary Committees of CIPFA, The Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the Institute of Legal Executives. Formerly Deputy Chairman of Aston University and a Member of the Regulatory Decisions Committee of the Financial Services Authority. Wide experience in employment and disciplinary matters in industry and commerce.

David Gilbertson QPM

Member of the Tribunal since 1999. Retired as a Deputy Assistant

Commissioner in the Metropolitan Police in 2001 after 30 years service, the last three of which were served as HM Assistant Inspector of Constabulary at the Home Office with

responsibility for a wide range of national policy matters. He is now a partner in an international consultancy which specialises in change management for large organisations.

Awarded the Queens Police Medal in 1999, he was previously responsible for all police operations in north and west London. During a varied career, he has been a visiting lecturer at the City University, New York, and was seconded to the New York City Police and the National Peace Secretariat in South Africa.

He is a member of the Tom Paine Society which is committed to the principles of democracy and freedom.

Mrs Sarah Gordon

Member of Tribunal since 2002.

A qualified veterinary surgeon and member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. 10 years experience of general veterinary practice. Employed by Defra since 1991. Veterinary Manager of the Leicester Foot and Mouth Disease Centre in 2001 then Deputy Head of the Defra FMD Claims Unit. Currently Divisional Veterinary Manager of Lincoln State Veterinary Service Animal Health Office.

Martin Hallam

Member of Tribunal since 2009.

Formerly a career commissioned officer in the Royal Air Force, specializing in Defence Intelligence, and held senior Board level positions on a number of Ministry of Defence Executive Agencies. Latterly as Chief Executive of the Defence Geospatial and Imagery Intelligence Agency. Graduate of the Staff College and attended the Royal College of Defence Studies, London. Currently a Justice of the Peace sitting on the South Somerset and Mendip Bench.

Stuart Hill

Member of the Tribunal since 2009.

After 21 years of engineering R&D and technology management became Managing Director of British Rail Production Services in 1993; Chief Executive of HM Land Registry and Chief Land Registrar in 1996; and Chief Executive of the House Builders Federation in 1999.

Then joined AEA Technology plc in 2000, initially as Managing Director of the Environment Division, then Managing Director of the Rail Division. During this time also Chairman of two subsidiaries, Kinectrics Inc in Canada, and AEA Rail BV in Holland, and governor of schools in Culham and Derby.

Established Kynnersley Management Services, in 2007 to provide business and technical consultancy.

Stephen Howe

Member of Tribunal since 2006.

Retired Manager for Waitrose Ltd. Non-Executive Director for HMCS Regional Risk and Audit Committee South West Region. Member of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Courts Boards. JP since 1981.

John Jackson

Member of Tribunal since 2002.

Formerly Company Secretary of British Gas and Clerk to Dulwich College in South London, now a member of the Parole Board. Has been a non-executive director in the NHS and a prison visitor and lay assessor and until recently a member of the Council of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators. A member of the disciplinary committee of CIPFA.

David E. Marlow

Member of Tribunal since 1983. Chartered Accountant. Formerly Chief Executive of 3i.

Stephen Marquez

Member of Tribunal since 2006.

To 1987 senior manager with Systems Designers International plc.

1987 to 2003 senior manager with CACI Limited. Director of CACI Limited. Executive Vice-President of CACI International Inc.

Formerly a volunteer with The Terrence Higgins Trust.

JP since 2002 - 2008.

Non-executive Chairman 6pm Holdings PLC (quoted on the Maltese Stock Exchange)

Lesley McMahon-Hathway

Member of Tribunal since 2009.

Non Executive Director and Interim Director, most recently Interim Director of Post Production at ITV, The London Studios. Formerly Director of BBC Post Production, part of BBC Resources Ltd.

Previously, Non Executive Director of the UK Screen Association, the trade body representing service companies working in the film, commercials and television industry in the UK.

Prior to entering the broadcast industry held several Director positions within the printing industry including Managing Director for a group of six specialist printing companies nationwide.

A Business Mentor for the Princes' Trust.

Mrs Valerie Murray-Chandra

Member of Tribunal since 2002.

Born Jamaica West Indies, grew-up in UK. Actor, writer, broadcaster, JP at Highbury Corner Magistrates Court, panel member at Inner London and City Family Proceedings Court, Lay Advocate, recent (2001) degree in Law and History, former Probation Committee Member involved with grievance and disciplinary hearings as well as employment selection, former proprietor of property enterprise and currently involved in market research. Committee Member of CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy)

Millius Palayiwa

Member of Tribunal since 2009.

Educated at the Universities of Rhodesia, London, Oxford and Cardiff.

Has worked as a Chief Officer in a large London Borough; then with International Alert, in international conflict resolution, peace-making and post conflict peace-building. After that he became International Relations Secretary for Quaker Peace and Service, managing two offices, one in London and the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in Geneva, working with "decision makers and policy shapers" to address issues of peace making and peace building in areas affected by armed conflict; addressing the systemic causes of violence at a global level; and trying to create a culture of peace with justice based on nonviolent change.

For the last seven years, he has been the Registrar at Christ Church, Oxford and is now the Director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (England).

Mrs Caroline Pickering

Member of Tribunal since 1992. Chair of Broadland Housing Association providing social and supported housing in Norfolk. Chair of FareShare, a new national charity redistributing surplus good quality food to those in need to combat food poverty across the spectrum of the young to older people. Formerly a Director at the

Housing Corporation. Chair of National Approved Letting Scheme, an accreditation scheme for letting and managing agents.

Robert Slack

Member of Tribunal since 2009.

Currently Consultant ENT Surgeon and Undergraduate Medical Dean for Bristol University at Royal United Hospital, Bath. Investigating officer for Medical and Dental Undergraduate Fitness to practice procedures, Bristol University. Previously Council Member, Medical Conduct and Performance Screener and member of Fitness to Practice Committee, General Medical Council 1999 - 2008. Chair of Professional Behaviour Committee, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, Bristol University 2006 - 2009.

Michael Taylor CBE DL

Member of Tribunal since 2001.

Formerly Managing Director of his own consultancy company. Earlier employed by the Ministry of Defence, mainly in telecommunications, and a graduate of the Royal College of Defence Studies, London. Awarded an MBE in the 1982 Falklands Campaign and a CBE in the 1998 New Year Honours List. Chairman of the Dorset Police Authority, a Non-legal Member of the Immigration & Asylum Tribunal, the Finance & Tax Tribunal and a Deputy Lieutenant of Dorset.

Paul Wyatt

Member of Tribunal since 2006.

Managing Director of his own consultancy company in Cornwall dealing with employee relations, employment law and industrial relations. Employment Tribunal and Central Arbitration Committee panel member. Non-executive Director of Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Primary Care Trust.

Trustee and former Chairman of Speakability. Trustee for 15 years with Employment Opportunities for people with disabilities. Now ex officio member of HR and Remuneration Committees.

STAFF

Susan Elson, MBE

Solicitor admitted in 1970. Clerk to the Tribunal.
Accredited Mediator, Sits as part time Immigration Judge; Member of CIPFA Practice Standards Committee. Member of West Sussex Standards Committee. Experience of legal work in private practice and in industry.

Sheila Whitfield

Solicitor admitted in 1982. Joined the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal in 1998 as part time Deputy Clerk to provide cover for the full time Clerk and to enable the use of double courts. MA Cantab (Modern Languages).
Worked in private practice in a City firm and subsequently in local government, specialising in the law relating to Mental Health and Incapacity.
Sits as a part time President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal.

Rose James

Part-time Deputy Clerk since May 2008.
Admitted as a solicitor in 1978. From 1983 - 1986 she was the Resident Magistrate in the Civil Courts in Nairobi. From 1986 - 2003 she worked in the administration of legal aid, first with The Law Society followed by the Legal Aid Board and finally the Legal Services Commission. She was the Deputy Legal Director of the Commission from 1998 - 2003.

Lubna Shuja

Part-time Deputy Clerk since May 2008.
Solicitor Admitted in 1992. Previously a partner and head of litigation in high street practice in Bradford. Specialising in personal injury, civil litigation and matrimonial. Also a mediator. A member of the Association of Midlands Mediators.

Elizabeth Aldred

Operations Manager. Joined the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal in August 1995. Responsible for the overall running of the SDT office and management of the administrative team in addition to supporting the Clerk, Deputy Clerks and Members of the Tribunal. Duties include management of the production of written Findings, maintenance of the database and computerised case management system, editor of the website and preparation of AGM and Training Days.
BA (Hons) in Law and Business Studies and MSc in Criminal Justice Studies.

Valerie Ralph

Document & Listing Manager. Joined Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal in March 1994. Main responsibilities include listing of cases, members' rota and answering general correspondence.
Previously worked for South West Essex Magistrates Services, originally as a Court Assistant and then as a Trainee Court Clerk.
Diploma in Magisterial Law: Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives (October 2002)

Paul Condon

Document & Listing Officer. Joined the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal in 2004. Helps the Document and Listing Manager and deputises for her in her absence. Holds a degree in Music with Sound Recording.

Christine Donnelly

Full time Audio Secretary since March 2001. Main responsibility is typing the Tribunal's Findings.

Previously worked for a number of City legal practices in varied areas of law over the past twenty years.

Samantha Pinto

Senior Secretary. Joined the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal in 2001. Main responsibilities are secretarial assistance to the Operations Manager and typing the Tribunal's Findings.

Completed a legal secretarial course and obtained various OCR qualifications.

Susan Bromley

Full time audio secretary since September 2007 and is responsible for typing the Tribunal's Findings.

Previously worked for Kent Police and conveyancing office in firm of solicitors.