

# Newsletter

January 2009



DEVON & SOMERSET  
LAW SOCIETY

[www.dasls.com](http://www.dasls.com)

## **DASLS Annual Dinner and Dance**

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup>  
February 2009**



**Download the flyer  
from [www.dasls.com](http://www.dasls.com)**

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Employment Register

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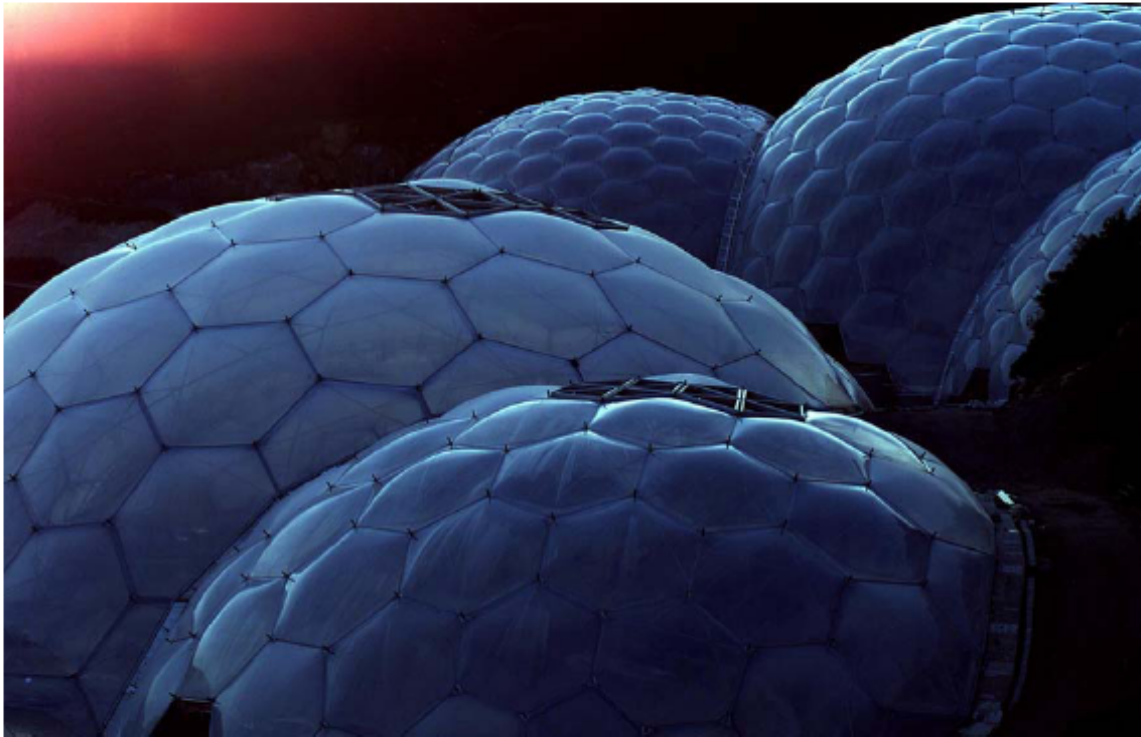
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*Courtesy of South West Tourism*

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and the Professions**

# President's Diary

By Alec McNeill, President

As I write this, my fourth Diary Page, 2008 draws to a close and, with it, the DASLS Bicentenary year. Much time and effort was put into planning for and celebrating the Society's 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary but, rather like Christmas, it was over in no time at all and now we must look forward, if not to the next 200 years, then at least to 2009.



employment difficulties and redundancy situations – a clear reflection of the current situation. A sad fact is that in a number of those cases there was evidence of employers taking the view that they could ignore their legal obligations.

If you are unfortunate enough to find yourself facing problems, whether financial, disciplinary or personal, the DASLS office has a list of SAS Members available to discuss matters with you or you can make direct contact with SAS on 0207 117 8811 or at [help@thesas.org.uk](mailto:help@thesas.org.uk).

On the other hand, if you or your firm are fortunate enough not to need the help of SAS at this time, will you consider giving your support to SAS so that it can continue to provide assistance to less fortunate colleagues? It receives a small contribution from the Law Society towards administration costs but otherwise has been reliant upon the goodwill of its members and as its work increases so, surely, will its costs. Any contributions that you might feel able to make will be of assistance.

On a lighter note the Society's Annual Dinner is booked for Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February. This time the event will be held at the Barnstaple Hotel and, although some of you may feel North Devon to be "off the map", the Hotel is in fact conveniently located just at the end of the North Devon Link Road and readily accessible. Paul Marsh will be joining us and I hope that as many of you as possible will join me for the evening which promises good food and good company. Please email [monique@dasls.com](mailto:monique@dasls.com) for a copy of the flyer and booking form.

Over the past 200 years our Society and its members have seen many changes and both good times and bad. Although 2008 was a year for celebration it also proved to be one of the more difficult years and many of us in the profession suffered from the slump in the housing market and the general economic downturn of recent months. Unfortunately the signs are that 2009 is unlikely to show any improvement. My firm was not alone in reducing its workforce and closing an office, and I found the task made no easier by a well intentioned BBC Radio reporter inviting me to respond to a request for an interview along the lines of "what it feels like to be Scrooge at Christmas". Sadly I fear that there will be further job losses and closures within the profession in coming months but when things improve, as they surely will, those that survive will be leaner and more efficient.

In the November Newsletter we published a letter from SAS [the Solicitors' Assistance Scheme], an informal voluntary organisation providing help and assistance to solicitors and their families and I would like to take this opportunity to draw it to your attention again. In the past 6 months SAS has received some 1800 phone calls requesting advice and assistance, more than twice the total for the whole of 2007. Nearly half of those calls related to

## New Guideline Hourly Rates

New guideline hourly rates came into operation on 1 January 2009.



Guideline hourly rates are used in civil litigation as a starting point for judges carrying out summary assessment of costs.

Summary assessment is the procedure by which the court, when making an order about costs, orders payment of a sum of money instead of fixed costs or 'detailed assessment'.

The rates for the bands National 2/3 are as follows:

Band A	£198
Band B	£174
Band C	£144
Band D	£109

## Letters to the Editor ...

...are always welcome.

Please write to Tony Spiers at Suite 5, Renslade House, Bonhay Road, Exeter, EX4 3AY (DX 8361 Exeter)

or email [mail@dasls.com](mailto:mail@dasls.com)

# Solicitors: An Outside View of the Profession

By John Sweeney, BBC Correspondent

In the Hollywood thriller 'The Firm', starring Tom Cruise, the law firm based in Memphis and often visiting the Cayman Islands are depicted as corrupt, murderous and greedy handmaidens of the Mob. As far as commercial lawyers go, this strikes me as an affectionate and understated tribute. The Firm's security officer is a chilling moustachioed hitman with a remarkable resemblance to Mike Mackey [President of Manchester Law Society and a criminal lawyer, who defended Sally Clark], but that must be a coincidence.

As to criminal lawyers, don't get me started... If there is one word that sums up these benighted parasites, mine would be incompetence. I've heard of one defence barrister summing up in a murder trial so drunk that he gave a speech for the prosecution. His client was, needless, to say convicted of a crime that almost certainly never happened. I know of another 'murderer', who was eventually convicted of murder, whose lawyer turned up in court in trousers which had somehow been shredded. Powerful evidence pointing to innocence, spelt out by one potential witness, was never brought before the jury.

In prosecution trials, I've sat and winced with boredom as a blithering idiot has turned a powerful case into 'not guilty' simply by failing to pay any attention to telling a narrative a jury composed of ordinary people could understand. You can always tell a complicated story of a con by metaphor, but the prosecution QC became a one man fog factory, shrouding every angle of the case with murk. The job of lawyers in trials is to explain the facts to a jury in a way that a jury can understand. It's astonishing how few QCs – up their own fundamentals, as George Carman might say, locked in a smug complacency – get this. Carman was a troubled genius but he knew how to talk to ordinary people.



Lawyers? I hate them with a passion. And, yes, all right, I do have a conviction for criminal libel, but that's from the French and as long as you can eat roast beef and drink beer in England I prefer British interpretations of free speech. It's fair to say that my feelings are returned. One BBC lawyer, who can't be named for legal reasons but his surname rhymes with 'Door' once, while driving in his posh red Saab convertible, tried to run me over when I was on my bicycle simply because I had disagreed with his view that we could not, possibly, say X about Mr Y. Often you can't get hold of Mr Door at all – a despairing secretary will confess that, yet again, he's down the Black Cat Club in the middle of the day. Lawyers? They make me physically sick. I'd hang the lot of them and start again...

Oh, all right, I am making some of that up. I still remember the shiver in my bowels when I first read that wonderful passage in Robert Bolt's play, *A Man For All Seasons*, when Thomas More and his silly son-in-law, Roper are arguing about the law:

**Roper:** So now you'd give the Devil benefit of law!

**More:** Yes. What would you do? Cut a great road through the law to get after the Devil?

**Roper:** I'd cut down every law in England to do that!

**More:** Oh? And when the last law was down, and the Devil turned round on you – where would you hide, Roper, the laws all being flat? This country's planted thick with laws from coast to coast – man's laws, not God's – and if

you cut them down – and you're just the man to do it – d'you really think you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then? Yes, I'd give the Devil benefit of law, for my own safety's sake.'

I believe in the rule of law. It's the lawyers that drive me nuts. I had always wanted to be a lawyer. At 15, I went along to the public gallery of Winchester Crown Court. Black guy in the dock, accused of rape. White woman, working class, not very articulate, bit of a chav, in the witness box. The defence barrister stood up and began to make mincemeat of this poor woman. He tied up her in knots, making her say one thing, then another, until her value as a witness was undermined. I came away from court thinking two things: one, that the woman struck me as telling the truth; and two, that I could not do that job, of deliberately rubbishing someone in court to get your client off. So, God save my immortal soul, I sought the moral high ground and became a newspaper reporter instead.

I hate lawyers, but there are a few of the buggers I would buy a drink for. Mike Mackey does indeed look like a hitman, but I remember his passionate conviction that his client, Sally Clark, was innocent of killing her two baby sons. That conviction helped me grapple with those colleagues at the BBC who made the assumption that the experts like Professor Sir Roy Meadow must be right. (Don't start me on experts.) It turned out they were wrong.

Likewise, John Batt, a commercial lawyer for much of his career, whose friendship with Sally's father led him to educate himself into the medico-legal thickets which shrouded the Clark case. Batt's forensic analysis of what went wrong with the Clark case remains the best legal demolition job I have ever heard – and it made the core of a radio documentary we did on the Clark case. On the day it went out, the Criminal

Cases Review Commission announced that they were sending the Clark case back to the Appeal Court. That was a good day.


Bill Bache – Angela Cannings' lawyer – is another hero of the Soviet Union, though as a country solicitor from Salisbury and a Tory with a small “t” he'd probably politely send back any medal from Stalin. Bill has a great grasp of how the law can lead to inhuman injustice. The same sense of injustice drove George Hawks to champion the innocence of Donna Anthony, like Angela, falsely accused of baby murder.

I'd buy a pint – just the one, mind - and a packet of crisps for Campbell Malone of Stephenson's. He may be a Manchester City supporter, but he listened to the mother of Stefan Kiszko when she said that he was innocent, despite all the police evidence, and she was right and they were wrong. As a reporter, the Kiszko story led me all the way to Bermuda to track down Lord Waddington, then the Colonial Governor who had the right to wear a hat made out of an ostrich's bottom on his head. David Waddington had been Kiskzo's defence barrister at trial and my question was how could he possibly still believe in the death penalty given his involvement in a child-sex murder conviction that had subsequently turned out to be monstrously wrong?

It's injustice that makes me grateful for good lawyers. The question is: do you know any?

*John Sweeney is a reporter for the BBC who has helped clear the names of seven people convicted of child killing.*

*With grateful thanks to Manchester Law Society, who first printed this article in their newsletter.*



**Solicitors Support Network**

**For confidential help ring**  
**0800 328 4203**

**FREE & CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT FOR SOLICITORS**

**ARE YOU EXPERIENCING PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL PROBLEMS?**

**If so, you do not have to do so alone.**  
**Support groups exist to assist you.**

**Associate Membership for Trainee Solicitors**

Associate Membership of DASLS is available for all trainee solicitors in the area.

Associate membership is free and forms can be found at [www.dasls.com](http://www.dasls.com)



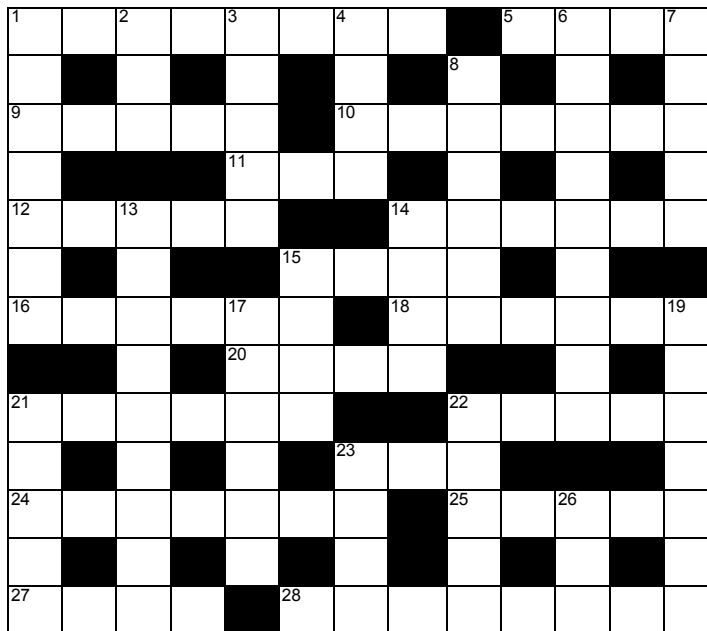
**DASLS CHALLENGE CUP LEAGUE TABLE**

Position	Team	Points
= 1	Veitch Penny	8
= 1	Ford Simey	8
2	Hooper & Wollen	6
= 3	Foot Anstey	5
= 3	Kitson Hutchings	5
= 4	Ashfords	3
= 4	Rundle Walker	3
= 5	Gilbert Stephens	1
= 5	Stones	1
= 5	Windeatts	1
= 6	Charlesworth Nicholl	0
= 6	Everyys	0
= 6	Over Taylor Biggs	0
= 6	Trowers and Hamblins	0

**DETAILS OF 2009'S CHALLENGE CUP EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 9!**



## Crossword Corner



### Across

- 1.&5. Novel item of confectionary (7,4)
5. See 1 across
9. Reject penny in spool (5)
10. Capsule closed and let out (7)
11. Many an auction item ... (3)
12. Aids servants (5)
14. Fortified, German writer edited (6)
16. Twisted drink, where race is held (6)
18. Disfigure—badly formed (6)
20. Otherwise, primary evidence leaves science experiments (4)
21. European in muddle over opus (6)
22. Within a moment, errors go in (5)
23. Slippery, I reportedly understand! (3)
24. Unattached people could be helpless stones (7)
25. To get as far as part of river (5)
27. Unfortunately sounds like a woman! (4)
28. Also erode seawalls (2,4,2)

### Down

- 1.&21. Char meat by the water in Somerset (7,2,3)
2. Goblin is initially in my puzzle (3)
3. Mountains - Damon and Graham? (5)
4. Remove - out's out! (4)
6. Entirely not in and not fashionable (3,3,3)
7. Apparently require massage (5)
8. Compassionate living drug (6)
13. European country (9)
14. Fashion found in modernity (4)
15. Laze about in mid-lesson (4)
17. Scarily (6)
19. Files spring months (7)
21. See 1 down
22. Nest sounds creepy (5)
26. Everything begins at long last! (3)

## Competition!

For your chance to win a fine bottle of J.M. Gremillet champagne, simply complete this month's crossword and send it to Charlotte Lythgoe at DASLS, along with your name and address. The winner will be drawn from all correct entries received by Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February. The DASLS address can be found on the front cover.

The solution will be published in March's newsletter

## News from the Non-Contentious Business Sub-Committee

By Patricia Durham-Hall, Chair

I am delighted to report that a Somerset Forum was held on 27<sup>th</sup> November at the offices of Foot Anstey in Taunton. This was an informal meeting of non-contentious solicitors from around Somerset and was well attended. The aim of holding a local forum was to tap into the grassroots and give local practitioners, who might not wish to join any of the DASLS sub-committees, the opportunity to contribute and raise particular issues. I was also able to outline the work of the Non Contentious Business Sub-Committee.

After a general discussion about meeting the challenges of current times, a number of specific issues were debated, including outsourcing work, further standardisation of documentation (after the successful publication and launch of our Leasehold pre-contract enquiries on the DASLS website), working with the Land Registry and other agencies, and the current problems with lenders, and various wills and probate initiatives. These topics engendered lively debate around the table and many of the opinions proffered will be added to the Agenda of our next Sub-Committee meeting on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2009. In fact, at least one of the Somerset solicitors present will be attending that meeting in person to present his views in more detail.

It was generally acknowledged to be a useful exercise and exchange of views and it is hoped to be repeated in about six months' time.

## News from the Contentious Business Sub-Committee

By David Turner, Chair

As you are probably aware, there are a number of Sub-Committees within DASLS and one of these is the Contentious Business Sub-Committee.

This used to be called the Litigation & Costs Liaison Sub-Committee but, moving with the times, this has recently been re-named the Contentious Business Sub-committee. Basically, it deals with issues that would interest members who carry out what used to be called civil litigation and criminal litigation. I first became a member of this Sub-Committee in 1995, and have recently become its Chairman.

For someone who has been operating in old style civil litigation, and now dispute resolution, for the last 15 years in the region, I am proud to be Chairman of this Sub-Committee. The purpose of this brief report is to tell you a little about this Sub-Committee; what we do; the sort of issues facing us at the moment and an enquiry as to whether there are any of you out there who would like to join this Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee meets three times a year; usually in Exeter (or wherever the Chairman is based). Because of the geography of DASLS, I chair forums once a year or so, in Taunton (and if there is sufficient interest, in Torquay and Barnstaple). The Taunton forum took place last month and was a great success with 10 or so people attending.

### What We Do and What Issues Are Facing Us At Present

We try not to be just a talking shop. The purpose of our meeting is to consider

issues facing contentious lawyers (civil and criminal) both in our region and nationally, and see if there is anything we can do to influence matters. A selection of recent issues are:

a. Block listing. Tired of turning up at court for an 11.30am hearing and having to wait an hour? We (and our clients) have a say in this and so we should. We can influence block listings or even ask the court to do away with them altogether.

b. Court restructuring. There are plans afoot to restructure the court system in the South West region. This may mean some courts closing. DASLS has been asked for their views, and we should give them.

c. Links with the local judiciary. Our Sub-Committee has influence. It is invited to the local court user groups. We can put forward our suggestions for the smoother running of the court service.

d. Legal aid and the Carter Review.

### New Members

If, as a member of DASLS, you are a contentious lawyer, please give some thought about getting involved in joining this Sub-Committee. It is a very good way of becoming involved with DASLS. We are not stuffy, and everyone is welcome. Please feel free to contact me.

Tel: 01392 411221

Email: david.turner@foot-ansteys.co.uk

Did you know .... back copies of the DASLS Newsletter can be found at [www.dasls.com](http://www.dasls.com)!

# Devon & Somerset Law Soc



DASLS Cha



This year has seen the Challenge Cup - a fun tour

Firms have been invited rounds to gain points.

At the Annual Dinner in F will be awarded to the tea points.

A roundup of the year's sp the pictures on this page.

Missed out on this y Challenge Cup will begin i

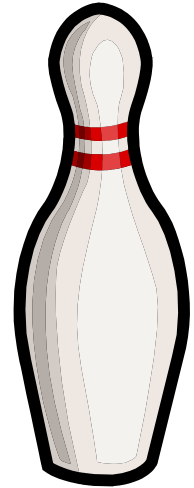


Photos by Charlotte Lythgoe, Claire Revell and Tony Steiner



# Society Challenge Cup 2008-9

Challenge Cup



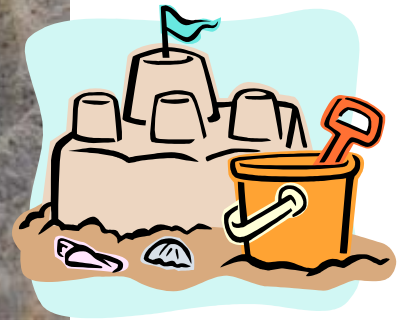
introduction of the DASLS  
ornament of sporting events.

to enter any or all of the

February, the Challenge Cup  
m who has gained the most

porting action can be seen in

ear's fun? The 2009-10  
n March—details below.



## Provisional Programme for Challenge Cup 2009-10

March 2009: **Skittles**


May 2009: **Tag Rugby**

July 2009: **Cricket**

September 2009: **Pitch and Putt**

November 2009: **5-a-side football**

January 2010: **Quiz**



If you would like  
further details of any of  
these events, please  
email  
[charlotte@dasls.com](mailto:charlotte@dasls.com)

# Have You Ever Thought About Becoming a Judge?

The Judicial Work Shadowing scheme gives legal practitioners (solicitors, barristers, legal executives, patent and trade mark attorneys) in England and Wales the opportunity to spend up to three days observing the work, both in and out of court, of:



- A High Court Judge;
- A Circuit Judge;
- A District Judge (sitting in Civil or Family jurisdictions);
- A District Judge (Magistrates' Courts); or
- A Tribunal Judge.

It gives those who are thinking of applying for judicial office an insight into judicial life. The scheme aims to demystify what it is really like to be a judicial office holder, particularly for groups which are currently underrepresented in the judiciary.

Please visit [www.judiciary.gov.uk/workshadowing](http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/workshadowing) for more details about the scheme and information on how to apply.

### Feedback on the scheme

"It gave me a fantastic insight into the role of a District Judge and confidence that it was something that I wanted to and could endeavour to do."

"I was not certain as to whether I would enjoy the role of Recorder, but my shadowing has made me feel very positive and enthusiastic about applying."

"There is no substitute for sitting with a judge when trying to assess if Judicial Office would be of interest."

"All those I came across whether full time judges, Recorders, or other staff were exceptionally helpful; and the insight I gained dispelled many misconceptions I held."

## New Members

We would like to welcome the following new members to the Society:

Miss Emma Doble  
*Bond Pearce, Plymouth*

Miss Karen Dunstone  
*Foot Anstey, Exeter*

Mrs Rebecca Fowlds  
*South Hams District Council, Totnes*

Miss Lyndi Hughes  
*LMH Legal Consulting, Exeter*

Ms Mary Jackson  
*Dulverton*

Miss Claire Revell  
*Everys, Exeter*

Miss Gemma Stevens  
*WBW, Newton Abbot*

Mr Charles Cooper  
*Harold Michelmores & Co., Newton Abbot*

Russell Dowling  
*Slee Blackwell, Barnstaple*

Toby Kippax  
*Rundle Walker, Exeter*

Robert Nicholson  
*Over Taylor Biggs, Exeter*

Robert Symons  
*Taunton*

The solution to November's crossword is below.

Many congratulations to our winner, Michael Martin of WBW, Exeter

L	A	P	S		S	M	I	L	I	N	G	
O		I		G		A		I		O		
V	I	C	T	O	R	Y		F	R	O	M	E
E		A		D		B		E		S		L
	A	S	S	I	Z	E	S		B	E	N	D
S		S		V			I		O			E
T	H	O	M	A	S		T	R	A	M	P	S
R			A		A			E		A		T
I	R	O	N		W	H	I	M	P	L	E	
F		P		I		A		O		A		E
E	X	T	R	A		R	E	V	E	R	E	D
		I		G		D		E		I		D
	A	C	R	O	N	Y	M		L	A	D	Y



## Update from The Law Society

The Law Society's new South-West Regional Manager is Matt Still. Matt can be contacted in the following ways:

Email: [Matthew.still@lawsociety.org.uk](mailto:Matthew.still@lawsociety.org.uk)  
 Tel: 07969 046 708 (mobile)  
 01844 261684

Post: PO Box 190, Thame, OX9 0BN

The Law Society continues to publish a series of practice notes, Updates and tool kits to help solicitors deal with the credit crisis and other key matters.

Visit [www.lawsociety.org.uk](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk) for more information.

### Money Laundering Reporting Officers

Matt Still is planning to hold two MLRO networking groups in the first quarter in the South West and would be pleased to hear from you if you're interested in attending, or indeed hosting a group.

### Lexcel

There are now 100 Lexcel accredited practices in the South West, and it's hoped that more will be accredited this year.

In the first quarter of 2009 The Law Society plan to have one Lexcel visit to the region, and two events. Provisionally a Lexcel representative will visit the region to meet a series of firms on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> February. If anyone is interested in being visited to discuss the benefits of Lexcel please contact Matt Still.

# MEDIATION

We can provide DASLS accredited mediators for Civil and Commercial disputes. Full details with **MEDIATORS' PROFILES** can be found at [www.dasls.com](http://www.dasls.com). Alternatively, call DASLS on 01392 411585.

### Fees

Case Level	Duration	Fee (inc. VAT)
Up to £5,000	1 Hour*	£117.50
Up to £5,000	2 Hours*	£235.00
£5,000 to £15,000	3 Hours	£650.00
£15,000 to £50,000	4 Hours	£850.00
£50,000 +	Negotiable	Negotiable

*Parties will be responsible for the venue and its costs.*

*If additional mediation time is required this can be agreed with the mediator who will invoice the parties directly at a rate of £200 inc. VAT for each additional hour.*

*\*One and two hour mediations may be conducted by telephone.*

# MEDIATION

# Report of the Law Society Property Section Annual Conference and AGM: 29th November 2008, London

By Patricia Durham Hall,  
Chair of Non-Contentious Business Sub-Committee

On behalf of DASLS I attended the above and I set out below a short synopsis of the event:

## Speakers:

Alan Hodgart (strategy advisor, H4 Partners Ltd), on shaping for the future

Predicts recovery 6 months to 2 years. Impact – depends what % of practice is over or under 25%. Opportunity to analyse business structures and competition and invest in training.

Steve Billot (director BDO Stoy Hayward) Business restructuring and analysis. Predicts recovery after further 12 months

Emma Oettiger (policy advisor to Law Soc) and Daniel Hurl (head of National Fraud Strategic Authority capabilities) Criminal market £15 billion, mortgage fraud £700 million. Technical presentation on money laundering.

Paul Clark (consultant Cripps Harries Hall LLP) Technical presentation on SDLT

Alison Crawley (consultant SRA) Synopsis of the Legal Services Act, LSB, OLC, approved regulators, new forms of practice – LDPs and ABSs. Methods of regulation unsatisfactory at the moment, as is the funding structure, which remains uncertain.

Richard Barnett (chair of property and land law comm.) transaction protocol, HIPs, e-conveyancing, lenders, on-line delivery. In fact everything that the NCBC is currently wrestling with, which is encouraging!!!

Michael Garson (chair of property section exec comm.), Richard Barnett, Gillian Charlesworth (director RICS)



Peter Bolton-King (CEO, NAEA), Grant Shapps (Shadow Housing Minister)

Forum discussion on regulation, regulating lenders, government unwanted intervention, confusing sales process with legal process, “transaction plus” HIPs, problems over personal searches, interim HIPs measures finishing 31 Dec 2009. NB: Conservatives pledged to abolish HIPs.

My comment: It was important to be there and view the polemics of representative bodies and lack of agreed consensus. Interesting that two outside analysts were invited to talk about the recession. A useful forum for debate and very well attended. The different roles of the Property and Land Law Committee and the Property Section Executive Committee became clearer.

## Appointment of Trustee

Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education (a charitable company) is embarking on one of the most exciting periods in its 180 year history.

Its new charitable objects enable it to extend its current provision, a thriving day and residential special school and college for the deaf, to meet the wider needs of the deaf community within the south west peninsula. This will include providing housing for deaf adults, developing community provision for deaf people, partnerships with related organisations and a significant expansion of its work with deaf children within mainstream schools and its

British Sign Language teaching. It has outline plans for a new Academy which will be one of the most inspirational and creative educational building in the country.

The Charity is now looking to further enhance the skills base of its Board by appointing a new trustee with legal expertise and experience. Knowledge of the charity sector would also be an advantage.

The role of Trustee is voluntary, although reasonable expenses will be paid, and has various legal responsibilities. Board meetings are held four times per year, however, attendance at other sub-committees may also be required.

To find out more please visit the Academy's website [www.exeterdeafacademy.ac.uk](http://www.exeterdeafacademy.ac.uk) where you can download a trustee role description and application form.

Alternatively, you can contact the company secretary, Sara Papworth on 01392 267047 or email [SPapworth@exeterdeafacademy.ac.uk](mailto:SPapworth@exeterdeafacademy.ac.uk)

**Closing date: 13 February 2009**

The Academy is committed to safeguarding & promoting the welfare of children and young adults; as such an enhanced CRB disclosure will be required.

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# University of Exeter School of Law: Students' Views of Work Experience

By Julia Paci, Business and Outreach Co-ordinator, School of Law, University of Exeter

The Law Careers Fair took place at the end of November at the University of Exeter. The event presented me with a good opportunity to speak to recruitment officers and trainees from many firms about how they perceive Exeter students. The information we gather from this event is important to us and allows us to pick up on current recruitment trends.

Our students were commended on their confident and personable approach as well as being able to communicate well. Good levels of intelligence and knowledge about the law were also reported. Comments like these are really helpful in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of our students, which we can address accordingly.

One of the areas which came up with a number of firms was that of work experience. The view is that firms are increasingly looking at the range and relevance of a potential trainee's work experience when applications are being selected. The School of Law encourages students to go for work experience opportunities independently and we offer a work experience option as part of the first year Introduction to Law module. This allows students the opportunity to organise a placement and reflect on their performance and experiences.

I asked our students what they thought of their work placements and here are some examples of the array of experiences gained.

Sarah Walker, LLB Student, University of Exeter:

"In the Christmas holidays of 2007 I spent one week doing work experience at a local solicitors firm. I aided solicitors in Family law, Employment law and Litigation, taking notes in client meetings, summarizing cases and independently drafting court orders. It gave me the opportunity to gain new skills as well as to build upon present ones. For example, in order to draft a court order I had to undertake research on the subject using unfamiliar materials. This not only improved my research skills but also gave me the confidence to attempt new tasks without hesitation.

This type of work experience is highly recommendable to all law students. I found it incredibly beneficial to experience the starting point of many cases and have an insight into and can appreciate the whole process. I was particularly impressed by how highly valued local solicitors are within the community, and also by the many areas of law in which they can practice."

Natalie Carless, LLB Student, University of Exeter:

"Student marshalling is a wonderful way for a law student to gain an overview of the workings of the Crown Court through the eyes of a Crown Court Judge. Sitting for a week on the bench of a court in Sussex was invaluable to me at the beginning of my legal education, as I was able to observe and

distinguish the many roles of those who work within the legal system. Watching the advocacy of the barristers and the organisation of the solicitors and court staff was inspiring, and a fantastic opportunity to see the law in action. It also gave me the chance to watch a complete trial as well as bail applications in chambers. Spending a week with the same Judge was also an excellent chance for me to ask any questions about the law and the professions within it.

In my opinion the main skill that can be gained from Student Marshalling is that of clarity and understanding. Being able to see and hear actions and words from textbooks used in court is definitely important for a new law student."

Undoubtedly putting their skills in to practice in this way has benefited Sarah and Natalie immensely, not least in forming an idea of the areas of law they wish to pursue. With the study of law being for many a vocational course leading to a specific career, it seems logical to gain practical experience alongside the academic study of law.

If you have any views you would like to share on the subject of work placements, or tips for our students on the best way to approach them, please contact me. Should you be happy to be contacted by students about work placements, I would also be pleased to hear from you.

J.C.Paci@exeter.ac.uk  
01392 263372

## Photos of Somerset

The DASLS website features a slideshow of photos of local views and landscapes.

We would like to include some images of Somerset so, if any member has any photos they would like to be included, please could they email them to [mail@dasls.com](mailto:mail@dasls.com).

All photographers will be credited in the DASLS newsletter.



# Heard it on the Grapevine: Port

By Andrew Ford, Quay West Wines

Port is made by running off partially fermented red wine into a barrel a quarter full of brandy, while it still contains at least half of its grape sugar. The grape brandy stops the fermentation at 16.9 degrees so that the mixture is both strong and sweet. The wine also needs the pigmentation of the grape skins to colour it, and their tannin to preserve it. In normal wines these are extracted during the course of fermentation, but, since with port the fermentation is unnaturally short, they have to be procured some other way – which traditionally in the Douro means by *treading* by foot.

*Treading* is a means of macerating the grape skins in their juice so as to extract all their essences. The naked foot is the perfect instrument for this, being both warm, and doing no damage to the pips (which would make the juice bitter if they were crushed).

The majority of port is now however made by machine in a modern way, but there are still shippers who feel that *treading* is best, and at many quintas this method continues.

Virtually all port is taken down the river Douro soon after it is made, to complete its processing at the town called Oporto in the district of Vila Nova de Gaia. The shipper's warehouses in Vila Nova de Gaia are known as lodges, and they have much in common with Spain where sherry is made in bodegas. In the lodges the port is kept in 115 gallon barrels which are known as pipes, and can remain there for anything between two and fifty years.

A great vintage port is incontestably among the world's very best wines and the main categories of port are as follows:

**Ruby Port** A sweet ,fruity and full-bodied



deep red wine usually two to three years old.

**Tawny Port** A light coloured wine of three years in age with noticeable maturity of wood from the barrels. Fine nut and caramel notes are displayed in older fine Tawnies.

**White Port** An alternative to ruby port made with white grapes. The dry and extra dry varieties are best known.

**Vintage Character Port** Fruity, deep red port, rich in tannins and separated from Vintage only by the very last part of the processing method.

**L.B.V./Late Bottled Vintage Port** As with Vintage Character it is deep, almost blackish red, full bodied and fruity, and has spent four to six years in the barrel.

**Crusted Port** A blend of two different vintages, not Vintage port but bottled early for laying down.

**Port with Age** The age information refers to the average age of the blended wines.

**Colheita Port** A vintage year wine matured entirely in wooden casks, which has kept its density of aromas and even its fruit notes, aged for at least eight years.

**Vintage Port** Bottled after two years in cask this style will keep its fruit for the whole of its long bottled life. The port lodges declare a vintage only in exceptional years, at best three times in a decade.

Should you require any information regarding ports or any other particular wine we would be happy to discuss this with you.

Delivery is free throughout Devon and

Somerset and there are no other hidden costs

*If there is ever a particular wine you are looking for we will do our best to source it for you.*

Telephone: 01392 841833

Fax: 01392 841996

e-mail: sales@quaywestwines.co.uk

## DO YOU ENJOY THE CUT AND THRUST OF THE POLITICAL SCENE?

### CALLING SOMERSET MEMBERS

The Society has sought to forge links with the local MPs through a small group of members – Parliamentary Liaison Officers (PLO). At present there are PLOs for all of the Devon MPs but none covering the 5 Somerset Constituencies:



Bridgwater – Ian Liddell-Grainger *Con*  
Somerton & Frome – David Heath *Lib Dem*

Taunton – Jeremy Browne *Lib Dem*  
Wells – David Heathcott-Amory *Con*  
Yeovil – David Laws *Lib Dem*

Anyone interested in becoming a PLO to any of these constituencies please contact Tony Steiner at DASLS on 01392 494110 to discuss.

## Why should you choose DASLS seminars?

We offer a local, cost-effective way for practitioners to gain CPD hours and to keep up to date with current developments in the law. We are responsive to requests for seminars on particular subject matters. Meetings are held with solicitors throughout the year to discuss potential topics and all suggestions are considered. We endeavour to secure high-quality speakers for our seminars, and we welcome suggestions of specialists we can invite.

You can now sign up for the monthly training e-bulletin containing details of all our courses and links to online flyers. Simply e-mail [charlotte@dasls.com](mailto:charlotte@dasls.com) to subscribe.



**Don't forget ...**

**All DASLS members receive a discount when booking courses.**

### **TOLATA Claims for Family Lawyers**

Wednesday 11th February 2009:  
2.00pm – 5.15pm: 3 hours CPD  
Elissa Da Costa

### **Civil Litigation Update (Yeovil)**

Wednesday 25th February 2009:  
2.00pm – 5.15pm: 3 hours CPD  
Dominic Regan

### **Managing Cash, Capital and Exit Arrangements in a Modern Law Firm**

Wednesday 25th February 2009:  
6.00pm - 8.30pm: 2.5 hours CPD  
Andrew Allen and John Endacott, *Winter Rule*

### **Corporate and Personal Insolvency**

Tuesday 3rd March 2009:  
9.45am—1.00pm: 3 hours CPD  
Stephen Broomhall

### **The Practitioner's Guide to the Most Commonly Litigated Areas in Commercial Contracts**

Tuesday 3rd March 2009:  
2.00pm – 5.15pm: 3 hours CPD  
Stephen Broomhall

### **Rights of Way (Tiverton)**

Wednesday 11th March 2009:  
2.00pm – 5.15pm: 3 hours CPD  
Gary Webber

### **Criminal Law Update**

Thursday 12th March 2009:  
10.00am – 5.30pm: 6 hours CPD  
Anthony Edwards

### **Costs, Funding and Part 36 Developments (Tiverton)**

Monday 16th March 2009:  
9.45am – 1.00pm: 3 hours CPD  
Dominic Regan

### **Employment Law Update (Tiverton)**

Monday 16th March 2009:  
2.00pm – 5.15pm: 3 hours CPD  
Dominic Regan

### **Avoiding Misrepresentation and Negligence Claims in Conveyancing (Taunton)**

Monday 16th March 2009:  
9.45am – 1.00pm: 3 hours CPD  
Richard Snape

### **Residential Conveyancing Update (Taunton)**

Monday 16th March 2009:  
2.00pm – 5.15pm: 3 hours CPD  
Richard Snape

### **Landlord Remedies and Tenant Break Options (Tiverton)**

Tuesday 17th March 2009:  
10.15am – 1.30pm: 3 hours CPD  
Peta Dollar

### **Landlord and Tenant Update (Tiverton)**

Tuesday 17th March 2009:  
2.00pm – 5.15pm: 3 hours CPD  
Peta Dollar

### **Delegation and Supervision Skills**

Thursday 19th March 2009:  
9.45am—1.00pm: 3 hours CPD  
Andrew Dines

### **Time Management Skills**

Thursday 19th March 2009:  
2.00pm – 5.15pm: 3 hours CPD  
Andrew Dines

### **International Divorce (Title TBA)**

Tuesday 24th March 2009:  
2.00pm – 5.15pm: 3 hours CPD  
Abigail Bond & Kambiz Moradifar

### **Probate for Support Staff**

Wednesday 25th March 2009:  
9.45am – 5.15pm  
John Thurston

### **TBA**

Thursday 26th March 2009:  
9.45am – 1.00pm: 3 hours CPD  
John Thurston

### **TBA**

Thursday 26th March 2009:  
2.00pm – 5.15pm: 3 hours CPD  
John Thurston

### **Managing People in an Economic Downturn: Part One - Motivation, Development and Teams**

Wednesday 1st April 2009:  
9.45am - 1.00pm: 3 hours CPD  
Keith Harper

### **Managing People in an Economic Downturn: Part Two - Delegation and Performance Management**

Wednesday 1st April 2009:  
2.00 - 5.15pm: 3 hours CPD  
Keith Harper

For full course details and prices, simply download flyers from our website:  
[www.dasls.com](http://www.dasls.com)

Book via the website or phone Charlotte on 01392 411585

All courses are held in the Exeter area unless otherwise indicated