

Chambers visit by Jane Hingston



In common with all new lay members of the Professional Conduct Committee I was required, as part of my induction programme, to undertake a Chambers visit. I was fortunate enough to be hosted by Committee member David Williams, who welcomed me to his set at 4 Paper Buildings.

My visit began with a useful explanation by David of the range of different types of Chambers that operate in the modern legal landscape - everything from huge sets of Chambers in cities such as Manchester, to the occasional lone practitioner and the modern 'virtual' Chambers model where the barristers operate without any common physical location. We discussed how these different

models, and the varying levels of administrative and collegiate support they offer, might affect the way an individual barrister goes about their professional life. We also considered how those factors might be reflected in the cases that the Committee sees.

The next part of my visit was spent with one of the clerks at *4pb*, who had set aside time in his busy day to tell me about how the administrative engine that underpins the work of Chambers is kept running smoothly. I found it fascinating to learn about the clerks' juggling act of managing solicitors' requests, making sure that the right barrister (and the right papers) are all where they are meant to be at any given time - as

well as coping with sudden changes to schedules to accommodate the vagaries of real life. It all seemed to me to be a logistical nightmare. However, experienced clerks appear to take all this in their stride and I was also interested to hear of the care that clerks at *4pb* put into cultivating good working relationships with their opposite numbers in the High Court and in solicitors' offices, creating efficiencies that benefit the Court, the client and the barrister. And I gather that all a barrister need do to be regarded as a paragon by the clerks is to be tidy, well-organised and always keep their diary with them on their mobile phone...

My visit was rounded off by David taking me to see the High Court, where a substantial proportion of *4pb* cases are heard. I was introduced to a trio of David's Chambers colleagues who had just emerged from a hearing and were considering next steps in the case. All in all, a very worthwhile visit for me as I start out in my role as a lay member.

Upcoming events

24 April 2013 - Next Board Meeting

1 May 2013 - Next Professional Conduct Committee Meeting



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