

You will have noticed that I arrived **late for the reception** this evening.

**Serco** brought me. Obviously they took me to three other dinners first, where they dropped off other chairmen travelling in the van. They drove past the Middle Temple, didn't stop and took me home again.

From there **G4 S** picked me up. You may have heard that the whole of the CBA Officers have been tagged on directive from the MOJ. They are trying out a form of electronic tagging by plugging you into your own mains at home so you pick up the electricity bill as a cost cutting exercise. But after 300 yards the plug came out of the socket and I found myself back at home again.

Anyway I arrived here eventually and very happy I am to be here.

How can I describe **my tenure in office** to you. Little bit vexed? Wee bit stressful?

I can best sum it up in these ways:

1. After about 4 months I told one of my close friends what was going on and he just said: "Cheer up , things could be worse "

He was right . I cheered up and they were.

2. The other thing is at one stage I called the Samaritans. I said I was the Chairman of the CBA; they hung up.

**Still, it's not all about popularity**

In one of my meetings with Mr. Grayling at about the time of the ballot I paused and said to him:

"You do realise they hate me at the moment more than they hate you?"

His eyes lit up as he said

"Do you really mean that?"

I replied "No, not really"

But there was a time when it was not just my imagination that everybody might hate me. As I got on the tube a woman in her 80s said "I know who you are" and she whacked me with her umbrella.

Still, I had the last laugh as I trod on her toes and took the seat.

That is not true. I kicked her ankle.

**Before I became CBA chairman** I'd had little to do with Bar politics. I

thought QASA was a paint balling game and VHCC was the Vest Ham Cricket Club.

I'd had some experience by being leader of the Essex Mess but I soon learned

that The Only Way in Essex is not necessarily the only way to deal with the

slightly more rarified atmosphere of speaking to the LCJ and DPP.

But none of this mattered as if I ever was going to be baptised, which I assure you I am not, the first week was a baptism of fire.

For it was **in week one** that I met our Minister of Justice and the same week we also authorised the QASA Judicial Review proceedings whose appeal remains to be determined.

That is where my list of **thank yous** begins.

Dinah Rose QC and Tom De la Mare QC embraced the plight of the Criminal Bar - they and Baker McKenzie acted pro bono, without whom the action could not have been brought.

I can only say that you have no idea what it's like to work pro bono.

Sorry that's a **typo**. You know EXACTLY what it's like to work pro bono as you all do it so often.

**In order of precedence I should have thanked the Lord Chief Justice John Thomas and the DPP Alison Saunders.**

It is not by chance that no wasted costs were ordered by Judges when we took our two days of action, nor by chance that no future prosecution work was jeopardised.

There is no doubt they recognized our plight and how we have tried to keep the high ground throughout the dispute.

Put another way they have left us alone to slug it out with the Minister of Justice.

I say slug it out. He's about 6 ' 4" in his robes, whilst I'm - not, so you may immediately say that's not a fair fight. I'm not sure why, but a number of CBA chairmen have been vertically challenged.

It may be related to the views of a charming but slightly bonkers old Judge who used to sit at Chelmsford. When I suggested to a witness that it was hardly likely

that my 5'4" client would have assaulted him at 6'4" – the Judge looked at me and said "I find it's the little ones that are the most aggressive".

I'd better issue this health warning to the government. I tower over my successor Tony Cross.

My next thank you again for acting pro bono goes to Alex Cameron QC for appearing for the unrepresented Defendants in the Operation Cotton case.

I was concerned that he may have felt conflicted from taking the case.

Many of you will know that a close relative of his is well known as being in the public eye - his uncle is on security at Southwark Crown Court.

At one stage I passed him a note offering my help. It read: "if you find DNA on any of the pleadings, leave it to me".

I cannot let this evening pass without **thanking my immediate team.**

**Tony** usually rings in from the North after he has had his tea, fed the whippets and eaten razor blades,

**Emma Nash**, the Essex girl who offered to take Mr. Grayling for a day in Basildon. I suspect she planned on taking him through the subway that links the court with the town and from whence few return.

**Dermot Keating** my first secretary who modeled his style on one of his Irish forbears, Michael Collins

**Tom Payne** bringing Oxford calm and erudition from where he lives.

**Richard Bentwood** trying to monitor twitter in the same way the Romans tried to monitor the Goths.

But all of them have worked every minute of every day with total commitment and total loyalty to me, the CBA and the Criminal Bar.

Also like to thank **my wife**, without whom the Monday Message would be a lot funnier but contain the spelling of a 9 year old.

Of course there is then **Aaron** the cement that binds the CBA together.

I have never met a warmer and more loving group of people and I'm so pleased that Max asked me a couple of years ago about how I felt about jumping out of an aeroplane at 12000 feet with no parachute.

Without them we could not have got through all that we have – so far.

But my other thanks go to you all. With the pincer movement of QASA and the cuts, there is no doubt that our morale was probably at an all time low. But through the stepped programme of first rallies outside of court time and then within court time and finally no returns, the government recognised we would not give way.

Thanks to your resolve the cuts to grad fee cases were taken off the table until not before Summer '15. If any government tries to introduce them, I suspect Tony Cross will take you down exactly the same road again.

What concerns me is this. I just felt a cold wind pass through the hall. I also heard the shrill noise of recent history repeating itself.

Just when we thought it was safe to go back into court comes the PDS. I know there is no case they cannot do in 37 hours. I know they only cost about 30% more than their independent counsel counterpart, but any expansion of the PDS threatens our existence directly and the Ministry will know we will not sit silently by and let it happen.

The Criminal Bar has found its voice.

What else has played its part in the recent past. I had lived for 61 years without **Twitter**, I'm not sure now why I decided to go there. I have decided to live the next 61 without it.

I do not say it has not played an important role in 21st Century Britain in much the same way as the Bubonic plague did in the 14th Century. It's just there are two things I have noticed. One is quite funny:

- a. It has the person that announces "I'm speaking about such and such a topic on LBC in two hours time". You'll be very impressed.
- b. Then the update, "only one hour to go" - ooh I'm very excited and so should you be.
- c. Finally, oh dear "they cancelled me"

The second is it does not seem to be a great organ of care and concern

### **Honoured Guests :**

I'd like to welcome 3 members of the Supreme Court and the Secretary General of the United Nations. I'd like to welcome them, but they wouldn't come.

Indeed at one stage the only people who had signed up for the dinner were Tony,

myself and Matron from the Old Bailey, who doesn't get out as much as she used to.

Even my wife initially told me she couldn't get a babysitter.

When I reminded her that the youngest child was 19 and currently in Australia, she then remembered she was washing her hair

## **WHAT ABOUT OUR GUESTS?**

**The Attorney General** – who to his great credit turns up at Bar Council GMC meetings – where people buy 5 balls for a £1 and try to knock him off his perch.

Dominic tonight feels a bit like when both sides came out of the trenches to play football on Christmas day 100 years ago. Dominic we are the allies, ok?

But it's great to see you sitting opposite Judge Gratwicke. The three of us shared the same pupil master and the same Bourbon biscuits (in those days we did not know that disease could be transmitted via fluids) in the same chambers in a different world.

**DPP** – Alison Saunders who has shown remarkable composure bearing in mind to whom she is married.

**Lord Justice Fulford** a friend to the Bar who has helped so many of us with sage advice, with total commitment to the profession both on the bench and at the Bar. Just a pleasure to appear before

The Common Serjeant – Nick Hillyard and Chris Moss from the Bailey

Circuit Judges, my mates from Essex. I'll mention my dear friend John Dodd

Maura McGowan and her successor Nick Lavender who I assure you have shown total commitment to the Criminal Bar's plight. Nick thinks before he speaks and speaks before he acts – I'm afraid I can't understand a word he says.

He is very proud in having received the polysyllabic insult of the year when an e mail delivered to him from one of his many admirers referred to:

“the preposterous entirely self interested hubristic triumphalism of the Bar Council,”

So that's a No – I guess.

**The Circuit Leaders** or “suck it leaders” as Maid Marion calls her merry men with whom the CBA is sometimes seen as the iron fist in their velvet glove. They too have had a very demanding year and we could not have achieved what we have done without their input & support.

Previous **CBA Leaders**: Nick Hillyard and Max Hill and of course Mike Turner. Peter Lodder, David Spens - & the Daddy of them all, Stephen Kramer.

I heard **Mike** saying to someone a little while ago "Remember: Do right fear no one".

The lady replied "I only asked if you'd like sautee potatoes Sir".

### **Our guest speaker: Clive Coleman**

The law press in this country have attained the status of leaders in a specialist field; Clive Coleman, Joshua Rozenberg, and Frances Gibb distinguished amongst them. The press are in the main appreciative of what we do and how well we do it.

They are now entirely skeptical about the material that is briefed against us.

Clive was a practising member of the Bar, advocacy trainer, writer, presenter of Law in Action, wrote the other comedy series Chambers on the radio and is now Chief Legal correspondent of the BBC.

### **FRIENDS**

The last months we have been on a great journey, to get our pride and dignity restored. I wish I could say the fight was over. But this genie is out of the bottle and won't be returned. We have kept the high ground and will not surrender it, whatever it takes.

Toast the Independent Criminal Bar and our Guests.