

Information 2011


At Serle Court we regard the recruitment and training of able pupils as vital to maintaining our position as a leading chancery commercial set. Our pupils are our tenants of the future, and we know our clients value our strength in depth at all levels in chambers, particularly when building teams for substantial cases.

This leaflet includes information on how to apply for pupillage, what we offer, and some thoughts from a former pupil and a junior tenant. If you have any further questions and would like to chat to someone here, we would be happy to help. You will find contact details for appropriate people on the back page.

Philip Jones QC
Pupillage Committee Chair



THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS FOR
PUPILLAGE COMMENCING IN OCTOBER
2011 IS 12 NOON ON 1ST FEBRUARY 2010.



We aim to recruit two pupils each year with awards of £50,000 for 12 months (of which up to £15,000 can be drawn down during the BVC year).

We offer:

- An excellent preparation for successful practice
- A genuinely friendly and supportive environment
- The opportunity to learn from some of the leading barristers in their field
- A real prospect of tenancy

What we are looking for

WE RECRUIT WELL-ROUNDED PEOPLE,
FROM ANY BACKGROUND.

In particular, we are looking for highly motivated individuals with first class intellectual ability, combined with a practical approach, sound judgment and the potential to become excellent advocates.

We pride ourselves on our reputation for 'consistently high quality' and for being 'responsive and able team members' (Legal 500) and seek the same qualities in our pupils.



Life as a pupil

PUPILLAGE IS RUMOURED TO BE TOUGH; A NOTORIOUS “YEAR-LONG INTERVIEW” PUNCTUATED WITH ASSESSMENTS OF VARIOUS KINDS AND A CONSTANT NEED TO IMPRESS ALL AND SUNDRY WITHIN CHAMBERS.

Certainly, pupillage is continuously challenging, but at Serle Court it is also as pleasant and low stress an experience as you could reasonably ask for. The members of Serle Court want to give their pupils tenancy, so they do their best to make it happen. To that end you can expect a year of steep learning coupled with constructive feedback, a variety of interesting work, colleagues who take a genuine interest in your professional development, and lots of fun along the way.

My first three months was spent with a member of chambers with a broad commercial practice and a specialisation in civil fraud. I could not have asked for a better start – the work was exactly the sort I enjoyed the most: pleading a breach of confidence action one day, appearing in the High Court to get an injunction the next, seeking summary judgment in a commercial bribery case the following week. At this stage it’s expected that you’ll make some mistakes, but the great thing is that you can compare your work with your pupil supervisor’s and gradually get to understand how the pros do it for real.

My second pupil supervisor specialised in property law and this was an altogether different experience. In the three months I was with him he appeared in two multi-track trials (as well as other hearings) and I spent a lot of time preparing cross-examinations and closing speeches. These are altogether different disciplines to the pleadings, opinions and interim applications that form such a large part of commercial practice, and played an important part in developing my experience of witness actions.

I began my second six with a member of chambers specialising in partnership law. During this time I received an offer of tenancy, which took me about 3 nanoseconds to accept. At Serle Court the members like to offer tenancy as early as possible rather than drag it

out over months, and in my year the two of us were lucky that the decision was made relatively early in our second six, and we were both taken on.

After that, things began to change gradually. I still spent most of my time in the shadow of my pupil supervisor, a lot of which was in arbitrations and mediations of partnership disputes. But I also began to take my first steps into my own work, making the occasional cameo in the winding-up list on Wednesday mornings, or performing research for other members of chambers.

By the time my final 3 months came around I had been briefed as a junior on a large banking case that was listed for an 8-week trial in the High Court starting on my first day of tenancy. This is a little bit unusual since Serle Court prefers its pupils not to do too much of their own work until beginning tenancy so that you spend as much time as possible learning the trade unfettered by the pressures of solo practice. But an exception was made as it was a perfect introduction to a big case, being led by a senior junior in chambers, and, above him, one of London’s top commercial silks. This consumed me for a good 10 weeks, preparing research notes, skeleton arguments, attending conferences with our leader, and so forth. Because I was mainly spending my time on the one case, my pupil supervisor at the time was more of a mentor rather than a source of work, who was able to show me the ropes and give advice about life as a junior. It was a great way to ease into practice.

I feel very lucky to have had such a varied experience in pupillage and a smooth transition to tenancy. Professionally, Serle Court felt like home from day 1, and I’m grateful that everyone here did everything they could to help and nothing to make it harder than it needed to be. ● GARETH TILLEY, PUPIL 2007-8



“Serle Court clearly provides exceptional barristers for all types of business-related law”
Chambers & Partners

Life as a tenant

ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL BENEFITS OF SERLE COURT'S EXPERTISE ACROSS THE WHOLE RANGE OF BUSINESS LAW IS THAT JUNIOR TENANTS ARE EXPOSED TO A WIDE VARIETY OF CASES.

In my first few years of practice I have been involved in insurance disputes in the Bahamas and Cayman Islands, yet also had the opportunity to act for The Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform in Directors' Disqualification proceedings and appeared frequently in the Bankruptcy and Companies Courts on insolvency matters.

In addition, as a result of Serle Court's strength across all levels of call, junior tenants work with leading silks and senior juniors within chambers on large scale litigation, whilst also having the opportunity to develop their own practice on lower value, but not necessarily less challenging, matters. Thus as well as being second junior on a dispute involving the investment performance of a multi-million dollar offshore trust I have also been instructed in my own right on disputes involving well known individuals from the world of motorsport, obtained a number of freezing orders for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and developed good relationships with solicitors which have led to repeat instructions involving professional negligence, company and insolvency matters.

In terms of advocacy, junior tenants regularly have occasion to make applications in the High Court and to appear in County Courts around the

country on matters which necessitate witness handling and other facets of trial advocacy. A further consequence of taking their own cases to Court is that junior tenants have their own advice tested in adversarial proceedings, have to negotiate compromises with opponents and litigants in person, and gain experience of taking strategic decisions rapidly in the heat of battle.

Although rewarding and constantly invigorating, the life of a newly qualified barrister can be stressful. As a result it is essential that chambers provides a supportive environment. In this regard junior tenants at Serle Court are fortunate that there is an unofficial open door policy and senior barristers who are always available to give advice and support. In addition Serle Court's clerks are sensitive to the challenges faced by junior tenants. Therefore although they work alongside members to help them realise their ambitions, there is no pressure to work unreasonably hard.

This friendly and supportive atmosphere also manifests itself in the daily opportunities to have coffee in the morning or tea in the afternoon with other members of chambers, as well as in impromptu drinks with other members after work and frequent social and sporting events with clients. ● MATTHEW MORRISON, TENANT SINCE 2005

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What we do

Banking
Chancery
Civil Fraud
Commercial Litigation
Company
Financial Services
Insolvency
Insurance and Reinsurance
Partnership and LLP
Professional Negligence
Property
Sports, Entertainment and Media
Trusts and Probate

How to apply

THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS FOR PUPILLAGE COMMENCING IN OCTOBER 2011 IS 12 NOON ON 1ST FEBRUARY 2010. INTERVIEWS WILL TAKE PLACE IN FEBRUARY AND OFFERS WILL BE MADE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND IN ANY EVENT BY THE MIDDLE OF MARCH 2010.

APPLICATIONS FOR PUPILLAGES COMMENCING IN OCTOBER 2011 SHOULD BE MADE ON A CHAMBERS' APPLICATION FORM (AVAILABLE FROM KATHRYN BARRY OR OUR WEBSITE) AND NOT THROUGH OLPAS.

Equal opportunities

SERLE COURT IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER AND IS COMMITTED TO DIVERSITY AMONGST ITS STAFF, PUPILS AND MEMBERS. WE ENCOURAGE AND WELCOME APPLICATIONS FROM WOMEN, PEOPLE OF MINORITY ETHNIC ORIGIN AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS CANDIDATES FROM OTHER GROUPS WHICH ARE UNDER REPRESENTED IN THE LEGAL SECTOR.

Further information

PUPILLAGE SECRETARY: JENNIFER HAYWOOD
MINI PUPILLAGE SECRETARY: MATTHEW MORRISON
ADMINISTRATOR: KATHRYN BARRY

PUPILLAGE@SERLECOURT.CO.UK

Deadline

THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS FOR PUPILLAGE COMMENCING IN OCTOBER 2011 IS **12 NOON 1ST FEBRUARY 2010.**



serle court

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www.serlecourt.co.uk



“Forward thinking Serle Court is an approachable, commercially aware set”

Legal 500

“Widely admired by many, Serle Court has a host of excellent advocates”

Legal 500

“Able to field true specialists in most areas relating to chancery and commercial work”

Chambers & Partners

“No other set boasts quite so unstuffy an attitude”

Chambers & Partners



Mini pupillage

WE ENCOURAGE PROSPECTIVE PUPILS TO HAVE A MINI PUPILLAGE WITH US, THOUGH THIS IS NOT A PRE-REQUISITE FOR PUPILLAGE.

Mini pupillages for law undergraduate students take place during June, July and September of each year and we therefore invite applications from second year undergraduates prior to the start of the university long vacation. CPE students are invited to apply once they have started their CPE

courses, with a view to spending a mini pupillage in chambers once they have completed a term of legal study. Applications for mini pupillages should be made on a chambers' application form (available from Kathryn Barry or our website).

Tenancy at Serle Court

OUR POLICY IS ONE OF CONTINUING PLANNED EXPANSION, AND WE RECRUIT OUR JUNIOR TENANTS EXCLUSIVELY FROM OUR OWN PUPILS.

12 of our last 16 pupils are now tenants. The other four are successfully pursuing careers elsewhere, two of them are tenants at other leading sets. New tenants at Serle Court pay no rent in their first year of practice, and no chambers expenses until their earnings exceed £50,000 per annum. We provide an income guarantee worth up to £100,000 over the first two years of practice.

We work hard but also believe it's important to have a balanced life. Tenants choose their own working hours and approach and our clerks are not slave drivers but work with our barristers to assist them in building the practice they want.

Facilities support

OUR STAFF TEAM, LED BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE NICOLA SAWFORD, IS FIRST CLASS.

Our Clerks have considerable clerking experience, and we also have specialist staff to support members with finance, marketing and general administration.

We occupy one of the finest buildings in the Inns. Our spacious 17th century premises were interior

designed by award-winning modern architect Niall McLaughlin and provide excellent facilities for members and clients. We have access to the best on-line research material and all our IT facilities are accessible remotely, enabling members to work from home, or indeed any location in the world.

