

Information 2013

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

Mini-pupillage

WE ENCOURAGE PROSPECTIVE PUPILS TO UNDERTAKE A MINI-PUPILLAGE WITH US THOUGH THIS IS NOT A PREREQUISITE FOR PUPILLAGE.

Mini-pupillage at Serle Court is designed to be an enjoyable and varied experience. Our mini-pupils experience all aspects of life as a practising barrister, including court work, conferences and paperwork. Mini-pupillage is also a valuable opportunity to experience at first hand our informal and friendly atmosphere. Mini-pupillages last for one day and are not funded. We offer about 30 mini-pupillages each year

to students who have completed the last year of a law degree or at least one term of the GDL or equivalent. These are available all year, but vacation periods (Christmas, Easter, August and September) are best avoided. We will reimburse reasonable travel expenses. 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.

8 of our last 13 pupils are now tenants. 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 £120,000 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 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.

We occupy one of the finest buildings in the Inns. It is a spacious 17th century premises which has undergone extensive refurbishment to enable us to provide excellent facilities for members and clients.

“Staggeringly fine commercial ability and a marvellous business-like approach”

“Serle court is one of the great success stories of the last decade”

“Outstandingly welcoming attitude, charming informality”

“No other set boasts quite so unstuffy an attitude”
Chambers & Partners 2011

How to apply

THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS FOR PUPILLAGE COMMENCING IN OCTOBER 2013 IS 12 NOON ON 6TH FEBRUARY 2012. INTERVIEWS WILL TAKE PLACE IN FEBRUARY AND OFFERS WILL BE MADE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND IN ANY EVENT BY THE MIDDLE OF MARCH 2012.

APPLICATIONS FOR PUPILLAGES COMMENCING IN OCTOBER 2013 SHOULD BE MADE ON A CHAMBERS' APPLICATION FORM (AVAILABLE FROM KATHRYN BARRY OR OUR WEBSITE) AND NOT THROUGH OLPAS.

Equality and diversity

SERLE COURT IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER AND IS COMMITTED TO EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AMONGST ITS STAFF, PUPILS AND MEMBERS. SEVERAL MEMBERS ARE INVOLVED IN SCHEMES TO INCREASE DIVERSITY AT THE BAR. 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: MATTHEW MORRISON
MINI-PUPILLAGE SECRETARY: GARETH TILLEY
ADMINISTRATOR: KATHRYN BARRY

PUPILLAGE@SERLECOURT.CO.UK

Deadline

THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS FOR PUPILLAGE COMMENCING IN OCTOBER 2013 IS **12 NOON 6TH FEBRUARY 2012.**

We aim to recruit two pupils each year with awards of £60,000 for 12 months (of which up to £20,000 can be drawn down during the BPTC 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 ARE INTERESTED IN WELL-ROUNDED CANDIDATES FROM ANY BACKGROUND.

Chambers looks for highly motivated individuals with outstanding intellectual ability, combined with a practical approach, sound judgment, an ability to develop good client relationships and the potential to become excellent advocates.

Serle Court has a reputation for 'consistently high quality' and for having 'responsive and able team members' (Legal 500) and seeks the same qualities in pupils. Chambers generally requires a degree classification of a good 2:1 as a minimum.

Life as a pupil

FOR A STUDENT LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, THE PROSPECT OF PUPILLAGE CAN BE A DAUNTING ONE.

I remember hearing rumours of pupils being subjected to constant rounds of formal assessments and being expected never to make a mistake.

It was clear as soon as I began my pupillage at Serle Court that my experience would be very different. I found the members of chambers to be open, friendly and understanding of the fact that pupils inevitably need a lot of guidance, particularly in their first few months. This was to continue throughout my pupillage: at every stage I had the benefit of helpful advice and assistance from members of chambers. I also received plenty of constructive and encouraging feedback on my work, which, unlike the work done by pupils at many other sets, was not formally assessed. Within a few weeks, I felt perfectly comfortable in my new surroundings.

The stereotypical view of chancery practice would suggest that chancery barristers spend all their time poring over dusty law reports from the eighteenth century and writing lengthy opinions on the meaning of trust deeds. My pupillage at Serle Court bore very little resemblance to that stereotype. Instead, the work that I did during my twelve months of pupillage was extremely varied, both in terms of its subject matter and in terms of the nature of the tasks I was given to do. I would find myself, say, drafting advice for trustees of an offshore trust one day, going to court on an application for an injunction to prevent someone from dumping building materials on his neighbour's driveway the next, and then later in the week chasing the proceeds of fraud through bank accounts around the world. Moreover, my four pupil supervisors had practices with quite different areas of emphasis, which meant that each period of three months presented new challenges and offered new experiences. This variety is, in my view, one of the most compelling features of pupillage at Serle Court.

The one thing that every second six pupil wants to know is whether he or she is going to be offered tenancy. At some sets, pupils know from the outset that they will not all be taken on and are made to wait to discover which of them will make the cut. At Serle Court, however, it was clear from the very beginning that the other pupil and I could both be offered tenancy if our work was good enough. This meant that there was no atmosphere of competition between us. The tenancy decisions were also made early: we both received an offer of tenancy early in our second six and were then able to focus in the remaining months of pupillage on learning as much as we could from our supervisors and preparing for practice.

Shortly after the tenancy decisions were made, I started working on an appeal to the Privy Council from judicial review proceedings in the Bahamas. Judicial review proceedings fall outside of Serle Court's core practice areas but cases of this sort do come along from time to time. I never imagined before I started pupillage that I would find myself writing draft submissions to the Privy Council on a public law case, nor that I would enjoy doing so as much as I did. My involvement in the case as a pupil also subsequently resulted in an opportunity to appear before the Privy Council myself. Even though my submissions were on a very short point and lasted about thirty seconds, it was a great experience.

Having now completed my pupillage at Serle Court, I can look back upon an experience which surpassed my expectations and which was genuinely interesting and enjoyable every day. As a junior tenant, I have continued to work on some cases on which I worked as a pupil and, so far, have been able to maintain that variety of work which I found so compelling during pupillage. **PAUL ADAMS, PUPIL 2008-9**

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

Life as a tenant

I DID NOT HAVE A TYPICAL BEGINNING TO TENANCY, BUT THEN AGAIN IS THERE ANY SUCH THING?

For my first 10 months I worked almost exclusively on one case, a massive offshore trusts dispute. This case had me more or less continuously travelling between London, Jersey, and Saudi Arabia, working with 4 other members of chambers on a trial that lasted over 100 hearing days. Although at the time I was a bit envious of my contemporaries, with their varied practices, I think I got a pretty unique and valuable introduction to handling big-ticket litigation with all its twists and turns.

The case concluded when I was on my summer holiday so when I returned I suddenly had a clear desk and no idea what I would be doing next. It didn't take long for the phone to ring, and since then my practice has gone from one extreme to the other. Instead of one massive case I now principally find myself juggling my own smaller cases on a whole range of areas and spending quite a lot of time on my feet in court. I also have a couple of ongoing matters in which I am led by silks in chambers.

If I look at the last five things I did as a random sample of my practice, this morning I finished drafting particulars of claim in an offshore fraud matter and yesterday I spent most of the day in conference with my client, the executor of an estate, preparing for a 3-day trial in which he is attempting

to recover property from the deceased's former partner. Last week I appeared in an insolvency application in the High Court to remove provisional liquidators of an airline company for apparent bias, wrote a short opinion about a boundary dispute, and appeared in a County Court defending a claim by HMRC against a firm of building contractors.

In the early years lots of different things will cross your desk, so much so that you feel like you never do the same thing twice. This has its ups and downs. On the one hand, there's always something new and interesting to look at and figure out; on the other, every time you venture into unfamiliar territory, there's quite a lot of leg work to be done in getting your head around the area. In that respect it helps that everyone here is so supportive of junior tenants. In fact it seems to me that a lot of them take positive glee in putting in their 5 pence on what they would do in my situation, whether it be in a chance meeting on the stairs, over a morning coffee, or a drink after work. Ultimately though, making your own decisions and growing in ability is very rewarding – and when the phone rings from your first repeat client it's fair to think you must be getting something right. **GARETH TILLEY, TENANT SINCE 2008**

What we do

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

