

## **SJA E-NEWS**

Forty-third Issue – December 2013

### **SJA NEWS**

No SJA Committees have met since the last E-News

### **OTHER NEWS**

#### **“Scotland’s Future”**

Clearly, the White Paper “Scotland’s Future” is the hot topic at the time of going to press.

Chapter 7 covers “Justice, Security and Home Affairs”, and members will no doubt be particularly interested in that part of it.

The whole White Paper is available at

[http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/11/9348/0?utm\\_source=Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=45ab7ee091-SLN\\_26\\_11\\_13&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1eedb22a32-45ab7ee091-65406933](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/11/9348/0?utm_source=Newsletters&utm_campaign=45ab7ee091-SLN_26_11_13&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1eedb22a32-45ab7ee091-65406933).

#### **Court Closures**

The next hottest topic is the court closures under the SCS restructuring plan, and closures of Annan and Dornoch JP Courts have taken place.

In all, ten Sheriff Courts and seven JP Courts in all are due to go over the next couple of years.

#### **Corroboration (still)**

Provisions to abolish the requirement for corroboration in all criminal cases appeared in the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill 2013.

The Parliament’s Justice Committee has been taking written and oral evidence on the matter. This has provided the occasion for almost universal opposition to the

proposal - or at least argument to look at the issue again - from the Lord President downwards.

The written evidence to the Justice Committee can be found at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/66584.aspx>.

At the time of going to press, the Committee was taking oral evidence (including from your Editor on behalf of the SJA). Transcripts of the oral evidence can be found in the Official Report, in links from <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/65347.aspx>.

### **SCS/STS Merger?**

Legislation is likely to be brought forward next year to merge the Scottish Court Service with the Scottish Tribunal Service.

SCS is responsible to administration of the courts, including providing buildings, services and staff, and assists the Lord President in carrying out his functions as head of the judiciary. STS does some similar things for tribunals. The joint body would still be run by a Board chaired by the Lord President.

We will have to wait to see if this makes any difference to JP Courts.

### **New Lord Chief Justice in E&W**

England and Wales have a new Lord Chief Justice – roughly, the equivalent of the Lord President - Sir John Thomas.

He was appointed to the High Court in 1996, and to the Court of Appeal in 2003 and now replaces the aptly named Lord Judge who has retired.

He would seem to have Welsh roots, as he has taken the title of Baron Thomas of Cwmgiedd in the County of Powys.

### **Television in English courts**

Some proceedings in the Court of Appeal can now be televised, that is, barristers' arguments and judges' comments, but not defendants and other litigants, and only one court will be covered on any day.

**And if you're free next Tuesday ...**

On Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, at 6pm, the Lord President is giving a public lecture entitled "The Judge as Law Reformer" in the Signet Library (just next to Parliament House).

Entry is free: further details from the Secretary of the Society of Solicitors in the Supreme Courts, Ian Balfour, at 0131 337 2880 or [I.Balfour@msn.com](mailto:I.Balfour@msn.com).

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