

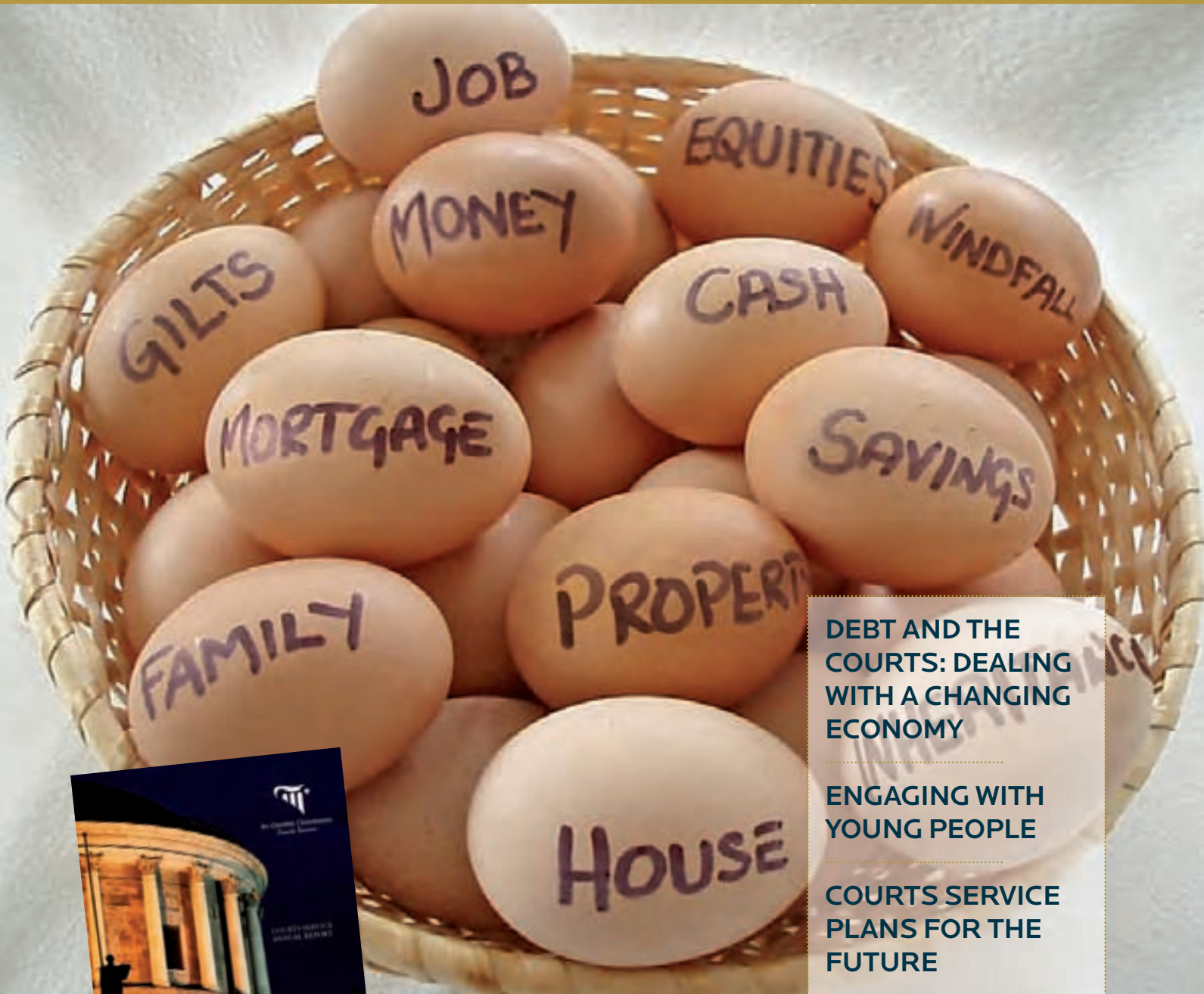
COURTS Service News

NUACHT NA SEIRBHÍSE CÚIRTEANNA



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service

www.courts.ie



DEBT AND THE
COURTS: DEALING
WITH A CHANGING
ECONOMY

ENGAGING WITH
YOUNG PEOPLE

COURTS SERVICE
PLANS FOR THE
FUTURE

MODERNISING
CIVIL BUSINESS
OF THE COURTS



HIGHLIGHTS
ANNUAL REPORT 2008



CONTENTS

REGULARS

Welcome Note	3
Practice and Procedures	4
Retirements	26
Obituaries	28
Book Review	31
Out of the Office	34
Quiz	35
Through the Lens	36

FEATURES

Highlights of Annual Report 2008	17
Debt and the Courts	21
NEWS	
Organisational Review - TASC	5
Modernising civil business	
of the courts	7
Family Law Update	8
Using technology	11

Engaging with young people	12
Outreach	13
Walk and Talk in the	
Legal Quarter	15
SOCIAL	
Travel Review	32
Poem	33



Welcome

In this issue of *Courts Service News* we bring you highlights from the Courts Service Annual Report 2008 which will be presented formally to the Minister for Justice, Equality & Law Reform soon. See our centre spread pull out on pages 17 – 20.

The changing economic climate has resulted in an increase in the number of cases coming to court relating to debt and property. On pages 21 to 24 Gerry Curran examines the effects the downturn is having on the courts and in particular what the increasing demand to recover debt means for court offices.

Aidan Kelly reports on Courts Service led initiatives and those in which we have cooperated with outside bodies to explain how the courts operate and so help demystify the courts system for the public on pages 13 to 15.

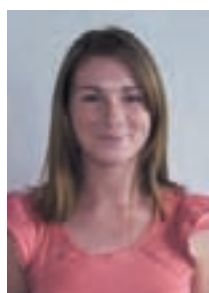
The organisational review 'Transforming Administration and Structures in the Courts' (or 'TASC') has started. Project Sponsor Sean Quigley explains what it's all about on pages 5 and 6. We look at a number of other modernisation projects including the electronic exchange of information with An Garda Síochána ('CJIPP') on page 11 and the review of the processing of work in the civil courts ('CCMS') on page 7.

You can read about The Law Reform Commission's report on 'Civil Liability of Good Samaritans and Volunteers' and the National Adult Literacy Agency's newest service 'Right from the Start' on page 16. We have updates in the area of family law from Ireland and in the UK courts on pages 8 and 9.

As well as our regular quiz on page 35 we feature a second quiz on energy awareness on page 12. Retirements are featured on pages 26 to 28 and our travel review this issue is from Portugal's Algarve (page 32).

If you have news of any developments in your area, or would like to make some other contribution to the magazine please contact us at courtsservicenews@courts.ie.

In the meantime from all the *Courts Service News* team we wish you a warm and dry summer.



Mairead Fitzsimons



Fiona Farrell

Mairead Fitzsimons is the latest recruit to the *Courts Service News* Team, Mairead steps into the shoes of Dymphna Healy-Clarke who moved on to Social and Family Affairs early this year. Fiona Farrell joined the team at the end of last year and has been determinedly keeping to the other side of the *Courts Service News* camera until now. If you spot Fiona or Mairead on your travels please let them know if there is anything you would like to see featured in *Courts Service News*.

Fiona Farrell



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service

Courts Service News is the magazine of the Courts Service. Contributions are drawn from a wide area and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Courts Service. The editors reserve the right to edit all contributions, including letters.

Courts Service News,
Information Office,
15-24 Phoenix Street North,
Smithfield,
Dublin 7.

Telephone: (01) 888 6459,
Fax: (01) 873 5250

Email:
courtsservicenews@courts.ie

Web: <http://www.courts.ie>

Editorial Team:

Helen Priestley, Fiona
Farrell, Mairead Fitzsimons,
Gerry Curran, Aidan Kelly

Print: Brunswick Press Ltd.,
Unit B2, Bluebell
Industrial Estate,
Dublin 12.

Design: Design

Communication, part of
Ashville Media Group,
57/59 Sir John Rogerson's
Quay, Dublin 2.

SUPERIOR COURTS

S.I. No. 95 of 2009

Rules Of The Superior Courts (Affidavits), 2009. The Rules amend Order 40, rule 14 of the Rules of the Superior Courts to provide that, where appropriate, a deponent to an affidavit shall provide proof of identity to the person taking the affidavit.

S.I. No. 93 of 2009

Rules Of The Superior Courts (Discovery), 2009. The Rules amend Order 31, rule 12 and rule 20 of the Rules of the Superior Courts and in particular make provision for the discovery of electronically stored information.

CIRCUIT COURT

S.I. No. 94 of 2009

Circuit Court Rules (Trial) (No. 2), 2009. The Rules amend Order 33, rule 2 and Order 59, rule 4(12) to facilitate the listing of an action or matter before the County Registrar for allocation of hearing dates where a notice of trial has been filed and served, or a notice to fix a date for trial has been served.

S.I. No. 132 of 2009

Circuit Court Rules (Service), 2009. These Rules amend Order 11 of the Circuit Court Rules in relation to the issuing of civil bills and service of documents and make a number of further amendments in relation to service of documents under various rules of the Circuit Court.

DISTRICT COURT

S.I. No. 92 of 2009

District Court (Forms) Rules, 2009. These Rules amend Order 35 of the District Court Rules to provide for the signing of orders or warrants by the Clerk in accordance with the provisions of sections 14(1) and 14(2) of the Courts Act 1971 (as substituted by section 23 of the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2008).

S.I. No. 174 of 2009

District Court (Intoxicating Liquor Act 2008) Rules, 2009. These Rules substitute Orders 68, 71, and 72 of the District Court Rules and the corresponding forms on foot of amendments in the Intoxicating Liquor Act 2008.

Tallaght District Court – Change of Venue with effect from 1st September 2009

With effect from 1st September 2009 Tallaght District Court's business will be transacted in the 2nd Courtroom in Cloverhill District Court, Cloverhill, Clondalkin, Dublin 22. This court will sit every Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday.

Juvenile business from Tallaght will be transacted on designated Mondays in Court No. 56, Children Court, Smithfield, Dublin 7 as listed below:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ■ Monday 7th September 2009 | ■ Monday 9th November 2009 |
| ■ Monday 14th September 2009 | ■ Monday 16th November 2009 |
| ■ Monday 21st September 2009 | ■ Monday 23rd November 2009 |
| ■ Monday 5th October 2009 | ■ Monday 7th December 2009 |
| ■ Monday 12th October 2009 | ■ Monday 14th December 2009 |
| ■ Monday 2nd November 2009 | ■ Monday 4th January 2010 |

International Association for Court Administration

The 4th International Conference of the International Association for Court Administration will take place in

Istanbul 2nd to 4th November 2009.

The conference agenda will focus on important international issues such as the role of international law in local and regional adjudication; the impact of the global economic downturn on court system budgets; the multi-door approach to dispute resolution and its implications for traditional adjudication; preserving court systems and the pursuit of justice when confronted by powerful and wealthy organized crime enterprises. It is also hoped to include some practical workshops.

Further information on the conference is available on the association's website at: www.iaca.ws or from Noel A. Doherty, Reform and Development Directorate, Courts Service, who may be contacted at 01 8886760 or email: noeladoherty@courts.ie.

TASC

Courts Service plans for the future with major organisational review



There's a major organisational review underway in the Courts Service with a interesting title '*Transforming Administration and Structures in the Courts*' (or 'TASC'). So what's TASC about, what does it mean for staff and how will it improve things for court users? We asked Programme Sponsor **Sean Quigley** a few questions.

What exactly is this review?

There are many aspects of our structures, processes and business practices that have remained largely unchanged over the years. This review will examine how we can become a more effective and efficient organisation by improving organisational performance, service delivery and deliver improved value for money for the tax payer.

Why are we doing it now?

Firstly it is included in our strategic plan. Many of our structures would be regarded as inflexible and outdated. We face a growing demand to improve efficiency, including the need to 'do more with less'. The rapid decline in the state of the public finances has accelerated the urgency of doing the review. Recent Government decisions such as the early retirement and career break

schemes mean we'll have less staff. We've experienced significant reductions in our non pay budgets, which are expected to be further reduced in 2010. We need to look at

offices, (c) Developing a model for combined court offices, (d) Developing a mechanism for resource allocation and (e) Reviewing the role of the County

We need to look at what we do, how we do it, and find alternative ways of delivering our services.

what we do, how we do it, and find alternative ways of delivering our services.

What exactly is being done?

We've been doing a lot of preparatory work. A number of projects/initiatives have emerged from an analysis of the gap between where we are and where we want to get to as an organisation. These projects, many of which are interdependent, include: (a) HR Strategy, (b) Review of court venues

Registrar. Reports from these projects setting out what has to be done to transform the organisation will be submitted to the Board of the Courts Service later this year.

What's in this for managers and staff?

It offers a great opportunity to everyone in the Courts Service to shape our own future. We can initiate change ourselves rather than, perhaps, have it imposed on us. We have a chance, with everyone

pulling together, to take a good look at our structures and try and create a better and more satisfying working environment and at the same time actually improve the service to court users.

What role can managers and staff play in this process and what is expected from them?

Managers can support projects that impact on their areas of responsibility. They can keep staff informed of what's happening. They will also bring the benefits of their experience to the process and many will be directly involved. Staff without a direct management role can engage with efforts to bring about change, whether through the introduction of technology, process improvement or otherwise. They can also bring ideas and creativity to the whole process.

Will the Courts Service get more staff as a result of this review?

There is a moratorium on recruitment as well as early retirement and career break schemes in place. In the short-term we'll have less staff. However, we'll be developing a method for determining the appropriate staffing levels in court offices. We're trying to ensure fairness in the allocation of the staff resources which we have.

What is the timeframe?

The first landmark is to submit a number of reports and recommendations to the Senior Management Team and Board in the autumn. Once approved it would be the intention to proceed immediately to implementation. It is likely that for example that the proposed combined court office will be piloted in a number of locations initially. The location of these offices has not been decided at this stage.

How will the Courts Service deal with problems that arise in court offices when staff leave and can't be replaced?

Clearly the world won't stand still while we are doing this review. The

impact of the moratorium on recruitment is already being felt in some offices and as staff leave on early retirement or career break, further difficulties will arise. Contingency plans are being drawn up to deal with problems expected to arise in some court offices. The Human Resources Division is working very closely with the Heads of Directorates on this.

When will implementation be completed?

We are aiming for a timescale of two to three years, but this is dependent on the necessary approvals to rationalisation of venues, legislative amendments and other dependencies.

What will the Courts Service look like when the exercise is completed?

We want the Courts Service to be the best public service organisation in Ireland. Key success indicators will be service to court users, organisational performance and value for money, and employee satisfaction. We are likely to be operating with fewer resources, both staff and funding and a reduced number of venues and offices. We also expect to see greater use of technology and significant improvement in

efficiency through standardisation and simplification of processes.

Is this related to the provinces only and if not, what's happening in Dublin?

The review will eventually span the entire Courts Service. However much change is already affecting Dublin with the opening later this



Sean Quigley, TASC Programme Sponsor

year of the new Criminal Courts of Justice (CCJ) building. This includes the establishment of a combined office. We'll look at the DMD and the Dublin Circuit Office management structure after the implementation of the CCJ and High Court Offices and Support Directorates will also be reviewed.

Sounds like significant change could be on the way – are you keeping staff informed and how?

Absolutely – we've already had several briefing sessions for managers. We'll have workshops with staff in the coming weeks. We've briefed the Central Partnership Committee and will

“ We want the Courts Service to be the best public service organisation in Ireland. Key success indicators will be service to court users, organisational performance and value for money, and employee satisfaction.”

meet Regional Committees soon and an initial briefing has been given to the Trade Unions concerned. We'll issue regular updates by e-mail and anyone who wishes to contribute ideas or suggestions can use the e-mail address:

programmechange@courts.ie.

Modernising the way we process civil business in the courts

The need to modernise is crucial for the future operation of public bodies including the Courts Service. The TASC report on the previous pages outlines the major initiative underway to make the Service more effective and more efficient. One of the projects feeding into TASC is looking at the processes and terminology used in civil litigation and developing an ICT system to support the resulting improved arrangements. The Courts Service Civil Court Modernisation System project ('CCMS') is up and running and quietly making progress as Project Sponsor, **Nuala McLoughlin** explains:

The Civil Court Modernisation System project has a dual objective: firstly to modernise, streamline and standardise processes in civil and family law cases and secondly to design and implement an IT system to support those processes. We need to do this because, at the moment, there are so many different ways, within and across jurisdictions, for doing the same thing. All of these ways are probably perfectly valid and equally meritorious, although some of them are bound to be more efficient and user friendly than others. The problem is that there is no single "Courts Service" name for something as straightforward as a summons for a witness – some of us call it a subpoena, others a witness summons. Indeed, there isn't even a single "Courts Service" word for the document issued at the start of a new civil case, for example, depending on the jurisdiction it can be called a summons, a civil bill, or a plenary, summary or special summons.

The multiplicity of names for forms and processes, the variations in procedures and the different ways of dealing with documents and files is confusing for court users. Experienced solicitors and law clerks rightly complain that what staff in one office will accept is completely rejected in another office for the same type of application. This is poor customer service to put it mildly. Staff who move from one location to another have to be extensively re-trained, which is annoying for them and for their managers. If this is confusing for customers and staff, imagine how difficult it would be to build an IT system to cope with infinite variations!

For these reasons, the Courts Service decided to standardise and improve processes before commissioning an IT system or systems. Bearing Point were the consultants that we selected to document the existing or "as-is" processes, review them and make recommendations for modernising them to make them user friendly, IT compatible and logical for staff who would be using them. The SMT accepted the Bearing Point recommendations in September 2008, and subsequently set up a Standardisation Group comprising senior and experienced managers. The Group's role is to analyse the Bearing Point recommendations and advise the SMT on their implementation. When the SMT accepts these processes there will be a project to roll them out to all offices, on a phased basis following pilots in selected offices.

Standardisation Group

- Verona Lambe (*County Registrar, Offaly*)
- Maeve Kane (*Supreme Court Registrar*)
- Noel A. Doherty (*Reform and Development Directorate*)
- Angela Denning (*High Court Registrar*)
- Tom Ward (*Chief Clerk Dublin Circuit Court*)
- Alan Donnellan (*Chief Clerk Bray District Court*).

The Group is supported in its work by the Programme Office, under Darach Green, the Programme Manager, who with his colleagues is also preparing the business case for the IT system.

COMMITTEE REPORTS ON FAMILY LAW



The committee charged with considering the recommendations of Dr. Carol Coulter following her year reporting on family law cases has reported to the Courts Service Board. One of the main views expressed by the committee is that a barrister or solicitor, whether employed by a media organisation or operating independently, can report proceedings for publication in a newspaper or other media, subject to the constraint in the Civil Liability and Courts Act, 2004 (sec 40) on disclosure of identity and any directions of the court. The committee did not consider it necessary for the Courts Service to obtain clarification of the legislation on this point.

Regional family courts were not favoured by the committee who

instead recommended the appointment of additional judges to the Circuit Court and District Court with appropriate numbers of support staff to enable the Presidents of the Circuit and District Courts assign extra judges to areas with a backlog of cases.

Among its other recommendations is the provision of improved information for family law litigants, the establishment of a central register for joint guardianship agreements and compulsory information sessions for people involved in marriage break-up to make them aware of alternative dispute resolution methods. The committee agreed that judges should receive training in dealing with family law cases and favoured the expansion of the Family Mediation Service.

The committee included a number of judges including;

- **Mr. Justice Nicholas Kearns** (*Supreme Court*) (*Chairman*)
- **Mrs. Justice Catherine McGuinness** (*President of the Law Reform Commission and formerly Supreme Court*)
- **Mr. Justice Henry Abbott** (*High Court*)
- **Judge Michael White** (*Circuit Court*)
- **Judge Gerard Furlong** (*District Court*).

The Report, which has been referred to the Minister for Justice, Equality & Law Reform, is available in the publications section of the Courts Service website: www.courts.ie



FAMILY LAW CASES OPENED TO PRESS IN UK

New court rules in the UK mean that for the first time the press can attend family law hearings in all courts. Before this the press could only attend magistrates courts. The UK courts hear approximately 200,000 family law cases every year in England and Wales. As in Ireland the dilemma continues to be how to balance the need to provide information about what goes on in the courts with the demand from

parties for privacy particularly in respect of issues affecting children. The public continue to be excluded from all family law hearings.

The new rules allow duly accredited representatives and news gathering and reporting organisations to be present during family law hearings, except for conciliation or negotiation hearings. However, reporters may be excluded in the interests of any

child involved, for the safety of parties or witnesses, for the orderly conduct of the proceedings or where justice will otherwise be impeded or prejudiced. In addition, no details can be automatically reported unless the judge gives permission.

The Family Proceedings (Amendment) (No2) Rules, 2009 are available on <http://www.opsi.gov.uk>

A STUDY OF CASES IN THE CIRCUIT FAMILY COURT

Material collected by Dr. Carol Coulter during her year running the Courts Service pilot project on family law reporting forms the basis of a recently published book.

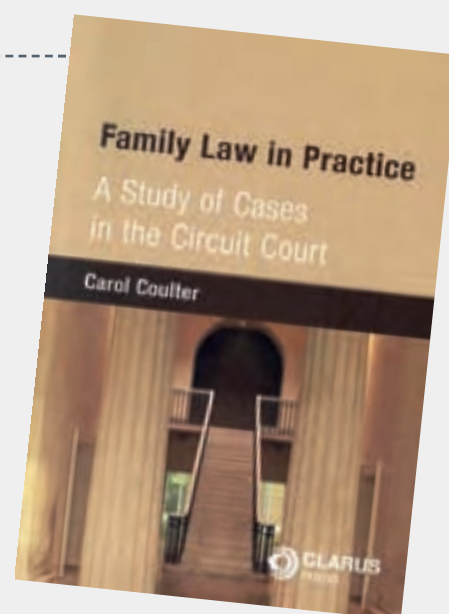
The book, titled *'Family Law in Practice – a study of cases in the Circuit Court'*, uses written files recording the ancillary orders made in family law cases where divorce and judicial separations were granted and notes taken by the author from her attendance at Circuit Court family law hearings throughout her year on the project. The result includes a study of the patterns that emerged in relation to the distribution of assets, the disposal of the family home, the outcome of the case for dependent children, and other issues. It is also possible to study patterns in judicial decision-making: whether decisions varied

widely from one Circuit to another or from one judge to another; whether there appeared to be any bias against any particular category of litigant; or whether other factors, like delay and operation of the legal aid scheme, had an adverse impact on litigants.

In her foreword to the book, Mrs. Justice Catherine McGuinness, Chairperson of the Law Reform Commission, says it's hard to disagree with Dr. Coulter's conclusion that in general the family law system can be seen to have developed in an ad hoc manner, with no over-arching philosophy, and no statement of policy from Government as to what the objectives of the system are. She is in no doubt that Dr. Coulter's work will be read by those involved in the practice of family law: she hopes that it will also be read by legislators.

'Family Law in Practice – a study of cases in the Circuit Court'

(Dr. Carol Coulter; Clarus Press, Griffith Campus, South Circular Road, Dublin 8.)



Additional family law information available

An index of cases included in the seven issues of *'Family Law Matters'* is now available on the Courts Service website, www.courts.ie.

The index lists cases by reference to subject matter (divorce, judicial separation, custody, access, maintenance etc) and identifies the relevant issue of the publication. All seven issues of *'Family Law Matters'* are also available on the website - Publications/General Publications/ Family Law.

ONEGOV: Supporting the Transforming Public Services programme

The Government's *Transforming Public Services (TPS)* programme was launched last November. The programme of Public Service reform is underway and will continue to impact on how all public servants work, manage resources and deliver services.

To support the process, two important new communications tools have been developed: www.onegov.ie a website that provides a range of useful information on the *Transforming Public Services* programme. Key documents are available for download and there are links to State bodies and services. The material on this

website is important and will be helpful in managing the work requirements of the Public Service reform programme.

A newsletter, ONEGOV, will be published quarterly and will feature news and reports on TPS developments right across the Public Service. ONEGOV replaces the existing LINK newsletter which, until now, was available only to civil servants. ONEGOV will be issued to all areas of the Public Service. Publication of the first edition is expected this summer.



Doing business by post with the offices of the Supreme and High Courts

Arrangements are being made to introduce postal filing for the Central Office, the Supreme Court Office and the other High Court offices including the Probate Office, the Examiner's Office, the Office of Wards of Court and the Office of the Accountant of the Courts of Justice. Director of Operations for the Supreme & High Court, **Nuala McLoughlin** tells us more:



“The new arrangements will offer court users an additional way to do business with offices for as many types of transaction as possible. We envisage that amended Rules of Court will be in place to allow us to offer this option from the 1st of October 2009.”

This change is being made in response to the needs of court users, especially callers to the Central Office where there are frequently long queues. Of course those who wish to call to the public counter in these offices will still be able to do so. In the case of the Central Office this will be particularly important for urgent applications such as injunctions or Article 40 applications, and for those who simply prefer to have a same day service.

There will be some limitations on what can be accepted by post. For example we would not advise any one who needs to issue a summons that is at risk of becoming statute barred to use this service. Similarly, we would not advise that it be used for issuing a notice of motion or special summons with a return date that is less than two weeks from the date of posting. The amended Rules of the Superior Courts will exclude the lodgment by post of a number of named items including books of appeal for the Supreme Court, booklets for the commercial court and applications to be appointed a “McKenzie friend”. Above all we would say that if you are not familiar with a particular type of procedure or need procedural information it would be better to call to the office to be sure that your papers are in order rather than sending them by post on a trial and error basis.

How will it work?

If you wish to use this service, documents can be sent by post. In the event that the Courts Service becomes a subscriber to one of the document exchange service providers, this will also be a channel that can be used (we do not have such a contract in place at present). We will also have a secure box in place within each office in which couriers or a member of your own staff can leave documents which will be treated in the same way as documents sent through the post.

Each envelope containing documents for the office you are dealing with should be clearly addressed to the office to which it is being sent. Staff of that office will check each document submitted for completeness and correctness. If the documents are complete and correct they will be treated as if you had presented them at the counter, and the relevant copies will issue for your file and or for service. Incomplete or incorrect documents will be returned

with a brief query sheet indicating the nature of the problem. We would advise you, before sending documents by post, to check them carefully as the postal filing system will not allow staff to remedy the kind of errors and omissions that are sorted out at the counter when you attend in person. Documents filed in or issued from the High Court Central Office will be issued or filed as of the date on which they are entered into the High Court case tracking system, which can also be searched on-line.

Is there a fee?

Yes, the forthcoming fees order will require that an additional €2 fee be paid on every document lodged or filed with us in this way, or presented to us for issue in the case of an originating document such as a summons or an originating notice of motion. The fee for a set of Probate papers will be €10 as there are a number of documents in the typical set of such papers.

Changing Your Name

Ever wondered what was involved in changing your name?

Find out all you need to know in ‘*Changing of Name by Deed Poll*’ an information leaflet published by the Courts Service earlier this year. The leaflet outlines the steps you need to take if you wish to formally be known by a name other than that on your birth certificate. The leaflet can also be downloaded from the publications section of our website www.courts.ie. It is available in English/Irish, Polish, Russian and French. The bi-lingual version is available in hard copy from the Central Office in the Four Courts.



FIRST FOR LIMERICK – as video evidence given from prison –

The efforts of the Courts Service and the Prison Service to provide video conferencing between the courts and prisons came to fruition recently when evidence was given to Limerick District Court from Limerick Prison.

This was the first time an accused person appeared before a court in Ireland via video conference link. The defendant could be seen and heard on screens installed in the courtroom as part of the joint Courts Service/Prison Service project. For its part Limerick Prison has provided a special room for those giving evidence via video conference link.

Presiding judge Tom O'Donnell thanked those involved with the project. "It is the way forward", he said adding that it was something he had been after for some time.

Courts Service Head of Infrastructure Services Paul Burns is pleased to see this initiative progressing. "This was an important step forward in the use of modern technology in the courtroom. It was a challenging project but its success is thanks to all who

worked on it, including our colleagues in the Prison Service. We are looking forward to greater use being made of this technology in Limerick and in other locations around the country".



Electronic transfer of information a winner

As with many technology projects it has a fancy title. But the Criminal Justice Interoperability Pilot Project ('CJIPP') is a lot more than that. Set up to enable the transfer of data relating to criminal prosecutions between the Courts Service and an Garda Síochána, the project has delivered major benefits since it was introduced in November 2008. Kevin Murphy, District Court Clerk in Longford explains how 'CJIPP' works and how it has improved efficiencies in District Court offices:

"All summons applications from An Garda Síochána are now dealt with electronically. The Gardaí apply to the Court Service Criminal Applications Unit ('CAPU') for the issue of summonses which are generated on the Criminal Case Tracking System ('CCTS'). Each District Court office schedules the cases relevant to their clerkships for hearing. Once this is done CAPU prints a summons and forwards it to the Gardaí for service on the accused person. After service, the summons is lodged in the relevant District Court Office and CCTS is updated to indicate that it has been served. The summons is then listed for a specific hearing date and time.

For District Court Offices, the time spent on manual data entry is reduced and the office has more control over court

listings. As a result staff can devote more time to other areas of work that may have been neglected due to lack of resources.

Since November 2008 all criminal case results in the District Courts are transferred to the PULSE system of An Garda Síochána after they have been verified by the District Court office. Having the same information on both systems has led to a reduction in the number of queries by An Garda Síochána to District Court offices concerning the up to date position of individual cases.

Before the new initiative the information on both systems showed major variations because of the manual nature of the data exchange. Data quality is very important to ensure the veracity of the information on both systems and District Court staff are acutely aware of

the need to maintain data quality at a very high level".

Catherine Glackin of the Courts Service ICT Unit is at the heart of the data exchange exercise. She tells us that on 9th June 2009 the Courts Service received 112,733 summons applications from An Garda Síochána. The Courts Service has sent approximately 1.2m records to An Garda Síochána relating to court outcomes, applications, appeal results, warrants and bail. "The focus now is to 'bed down' the system and plan for further extension to receive charge sheets electronically from An Garda Síochána and summons applications from other agencies. This would be an enormous benefit for the Courts Service as it would significantly reduce the data entry of cases on CCTS".

Virtual Social Networking with the Courts Service

The Courts Service has joined the Facebook and Bebo generation with the launch of 'Going to Court' a DVD and booklet for young witnesses. The DVD was filmed around the Four Courts and features staff members and a young presenter to explain what a young witness can expect in court.

Courts Service CEO Brendan Ryan recently presented the DVD to Fergus Finlay, CEO of children's charity Barnardos, for distribution to their many centres across the country. Mr. Ryan described Barnardos as "an organisation which is both a service provider for, advocate on behalf of, and lifeline to many thousands of young people. They have a specific interest in this DVD as they not only provide a series of supports to young people but they have provided advice to our video link staff who deal with young people about to give evidence".

The DVD and booklet build on work undertaken by the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform some years ago in the publication of a series of booklets with the same title to assist young witnesses. Mr. Ryan said that "the world has moved on since then with technology playing a vital role in the way young people keep in contact, make social contacts and look for answers to a variety of questions. It therefore beholds agencies such as the Courts Service to communicate with young people using information produced in relevant and accessible formats".

Mr. Finlay said that "the production of this DVD is a really positive step by the Courts Service to support young people going through the court process. Going to court for the first time can be daunting,

especially for children and teenagers. This DVD will give them an insight into court proceedings and hopefully make their experience less overwhelming." He congratulated the Courts Service on the wide level of consultation which took place in creating the DVD. He told the audience, which included well known advocate of young people on the margins, retired Judge Gillian Hussey, that his organisation had contact with many young people who may have to go to court as witnesses or to answer misdemeanours themselves.

Courts Service Information Officer Helen Priestley, Executive Producer of the DVD, explained to *Courts Service News* the need for 'Going to Court'. "Our courts are not familiar to many people – especially young people. They can be intimidating for people who have never been there before. They may be an anti climax or boring to others used to watching *Law and Order* or *Judge John Deed*. This production is a guide to what happens in court, who everyone in the courtroom is, how video link operates, what the oath is and a young person's job as a witness".

She went on to say: "most importantly it allows young witnesses to familiarise themselves with the court process. It also

mentions that you can arrange to visit the court, or one nearby, to see how video link operates in advance so that on the day you know what to expect".



Students from Holy Family, Newbridge with Mr. Justice Paul Carney, Fergus Finlay, CEO Brendan Ryan and teacher Sarah Allen.



THE DVD IS AVAILABLE ON

courts service facebook page, www.bebo.com/courtservice and at www.courts.ie.



Engaging with Young People

As well as the DVD 'Going to Court' the Courts Service has several other initiatives which involve young people in projects relating to the courts:

■ 'Let's Look at the Law' is a classroom based ten class module with a manual and DVD on how the courts system works aimed at second level students. It has proven to be very popular – particularly with teachers who have welcomed it as a progressive step in civic education

■ Visits and talks of the Four Courts and many other courthouses around the country bring the classroom teaching to real life

■ The National Mock Trial competition, supported by the Courts Service, is the biggest non-sport transition year competition in the country. Students prepare cases and argue them in the Four Courts in front of real judges.

Reaching out to the community

Community Outreach forms an important part of the remit of the Courts Service. This usually involves interest groups from all over the country coming into court buildings and offices to view first hand the facilities available to, and everyday workings of, the courts. From the mock trials competitions held in various schools in the four provinces to talks by the judiciary, it is an essential component of the idea of a Courts Service.

In addition to this inward flow of interest, many people organise their own events and tutorials, using educational material compiled and published by the Courts Service, to teach people in their own community themselves.

With third level courses in law proving to be one of the most popular and hotly contested courses year after year, it's no wonder that institutions are coming up with more and more ways to stand out from the crowd. Many education groups who specialise in law are coming into courtrooms around the country to view the facilities in person.

Dolphin House, in particular has seen many such groups enter its doors over the past few months – visits include students from the National College of Ireland's law degree and adult FETAC law students from the Northside Community Law Centre. The aim, according to FETAC course organiser Ros Palmer, was to give them the chance to view courtrooms from their own perspective: "Instead of just talking in the classroom, I felt it would be better if they could actually see the courtroom for themselves. They wanted to know who sat where and what went on, so it was very beneficial."

"It was followed by a Q&A with Judge Dermot Dempsey and a trip to the Central Criminal Court where we sat in on a murder case. They were very interested in that even though it was just the initial stages. The whole day was very interesting and extremely well-

organised," she added.

And secondary schools are getting in on the act too - An Garda Síochána runs a schools programme in each district nationwide. The Courts Service, as part of this programme, provides the popular schools' reference pack on the courts titled "Let's Look at the Law". Garda Peter O'Sullivan of Bailieboro Garda Station took it one step further recently, providing an inspired and involving way to engage transition year students by hosting a mock trial competition. Students were involved from across the county, with each school being presented with the same case, which he devised himself. Students then stepped in to the boots and converse of the defendants, jurors, state witnesses and journalists to name but a few.

Garda O'Sullivan, under the direction of his Superintendent, organised the four month long programme which culminated in the final trial being held in Cavan Courthouse before Judge Sean MacBride. He says the reaction was extremely positive; "We were in direct contact with the students weekly and I'm very proud of them – they put in a hell of a lot of work and did a brilliant job."

In fact, there seems to be a growing

"They absolutely loved it. I couldn't praise the staff in there enough- they were all very helpful and nice. More than helpful in fact!"

trend of Gardaí, with the help of the Courts Service, organising talks and events aimed at informing and reaching out to the local community. Pearse Street Garda Station has hosted the Night Time Tours initiative for children from the local secondary school over the past eight years. Organiser Garda David Campbell says the initiative really opens their eyes: "We take them to the Focus Ireland Drug Treatment clinic in Temple Bar where they



FETAC law students from Northside Community Law Centre meet Judge Gerard Furlong, and Eoin Manning of Dublin District Court.



Pearse Street Garda Station has hosted the Night Time Tours initiative for children from the local secondary school over the past eight years.



Students from Temple Street Children's Hospital with John Quirke, Information Office and Tommy Barnes, Hall Porter.

get to talk to doctors and former drug-addicts about the dangers of substance abuse. As they're kids from first to fourth year, it's a crucial time to share the facts."

"They're then given a talk by Judge Ann Ryan of the District Court in the Garda

Station who explains to them the process of going to court and the impact the court has on our everyday lives."

"I then send them off and they write up a two page summary of their experience. I have to say the feedback has been very positive and they really enjoyed their time asking questions, no matter how silly the queries may have seemed to them. I can't thank the judge enough for taking the time out to talk to the students. Coming

from quite a disadvantaged area, it's extremely important to reach out to them before they have a chance to become involved in dangerous or illegal activities."

Killinarden Drug Primary Prevention Group have seen huge success in combating the scourge of narcotics in their area. The group was set up in 1992 in response to the growing drug problem in west Tallaght. Their talks in local schools involve an overview of the workings of the courts, often using Courts Service material. The medical profession has always stressed the importance of knowledge of the workings of the courts, since doctors and



Killinarden Drug Primary Prevention Group.

nurses may be required to interact with the judiciary for various reasons. Miriam Carew runs a graduate

diploma in emergency nursing in Temple Street Children's Hospital. She brought five of her students on a visit to the Four Courts as part of the course as she feels it's important for all nurses to get a grounding in the working of the courts: "from basic things like giving evidence in court and knowing where people sit to the more tricky aspects like filling out forms and writing up our documentation, we have to know what we're doing legally. My students do it every year".

"They absolutely loved it. I couldn't praise the staff in there enough- they were all very helpful and nice. More than helpful in fact!"■

Put your energy into saving energy ...and maybe you'll be the lucky winner

The Office of Public Works (OPW) is currently running a campaign to raise awareness of energy consumption in state buildings. Ireland's National Climate Change Strategy includes a planned 33% reduction in energy consumption in the Public Sector. Peadar Ward, Estates and Buildings Unit is charged with managing energy conservation in the Courts Service nationally. The quiz below is part of an awareness campaign. Peadar tells us how the Courts Service is playing its part in reducing energy consumption.

'The aim is to reduce heating and electricity bills as well as reducing our carbon footprint. A number of buildings, including Phoenix House, are participating in a competition with other state buildings to be the best in the country at reducing energy consumption. Although this project has only been up and running for a couple of months there is already evidence of an improvement. In Dolphin House, home to Dublin District Family, Civil and Small Claims Courts, the energy consumption for the first five months of 2009 was 15% lower than the same period last year. Two simple steps were taken to achieve

Energy Quiz :

1. What percentage of the annual energy bill can be saved by turning off your computer at night?
☐ 5% ☐ 10% ☐ 25%
2. What is the recommended normal working temperature to which thermostats should be set?
☐ 20% ☐ 15% ☐ 25%
3. True or False: Switching your computer on and off consumes more energy than leaving it on?
☐ TRUE ☐ FALSE
4. Complete this slogan (20 words or less):
I can achieve energy savings at work by
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

this: switching off lights in unoccupied rooms and switching off computers and other equipment in the evenings or when not needed. Big savings can be achieved with a small amount of effort.' Let's make ourselves aware of energy consumption and agree to play our part to help make a difference.

Entries by post should be marked **Energy Quiz** and sent to Peadar Ward, 5th Floor, Phoenix House, Smithfield, Dublin 7. Entries can also be emailed to peadarward@courts.ie with **Energy Quiz** in the subject line. A generous prize is up for grabs so make sure to include your name and contact details with your entry.

The closing date for receipt of entries is Monday 31st August 2009.

Regional Energy Coordinators are:

- **Southern Region** - Willie O'Connor
- **Western Region** - Pat Conlon
- **Northern Region** - Brian Maguire
- **Midland Region** - Susan Cahill
- **Eastern Region** - Breda Fennell
- **Dolphin House** - Eoin Manning

If you would like more information about how you can reduce your energy consumption visit www.powerofone.ie

SMITHFIELD AT A STANDSTILL AS TOUR SETS OFF

When the Courts Service agreed to support Dublin City Council's 'Walk & Talk' programme, few could have anticipated the level of interest in Dublin's 'Legal Quarter'. **Gerry Curran** nearly collapsed by the end of it all.



Pat Liddy addressing the crowd at Phoenix House at the start of the walk

"**W**ould the large group gathered on the Smithfield Plaza please move forward and make way for the Luas, thank you", said the tannoy announcement at the Luas stop. As each tram arrived that Saturday it spilled out people who were making their way to Phoenix House for the start of Dublin City Council's Legal Quarter 'Walk and Talk' Tour. The plaza was literally overtaken by the crowd. The 200 expected had multiplied.

Eventually the 700 plus walkers headed off to be split into three (and at one stage four) groups to allow entrance to the historical Kings Inns and Green Street courthouse. Concurrently, Pat Liddy, historian was inside giving one talk, our own Helen Priestley was giving an impromptu talk in the park over a loud hailer in Halston Street, yours truly was entertaining group number three in the Round Hall of the Four Courts, and Jeanne Mc Donagh of the Bar Council was regaling a fourth group in a Q&A session with tea and sandwiches in the Distillery Building. The enthusiasm for the Bar Council sandwiches will live on in memory.

"Me heart will give in", I said to Glenn Hogarty of Limelight Communications who with Dublin City Council were our partners



Green Street Courthouse, packed to the rafters

in promoting and planning for this event. The tour took in key locations in the 'Legal Quarter' in Dublin with historical input along the way, including; the Law Society in Blackhall Place; the King's Inns - where participants could view the artwork and items on display

inside, and hear a most informative and welcoming presentation from Under Treasurer Camilla McAleese; the original Georgian enclave of Henrietta Street; Green Street Courthouse; and the Bar Council's exhibition in the Distillery Building.

Speaking on national radio leading up to the event, Information Officer Helen Priestley said that, "although the courts are held in public, many people have never been inside a court building, so we're delighted to be working with Dublin City Council on this initiative to open our buildings to the public. They have housed important events, and are of great architectural interest".

The two hour walk and talk had been a triumph according to the groups who arrived in the Round Hall one after another. No one noticed the day fly by as batch after batch of people arrived in the main entrance. The only worry was that the time was edging towards kick off in the Heineken Cup. The Four Courts, history or no history, wasn't keeping certain people away from that.

The throngs were addressed in the Round Hall by Mrs. Justice Susan Denham, who gave an historical overview of the building, the courts, the area, the civil war bombardment and the work of the courts today. A multi media presentation illuminated her talk and it ended with rare archive footage from the actual newsreel report of the Civil War bombardment of the great building and its destruction. The crowds were so big Judge Denham had to repeat her presentation. Some stayed and watched it twice. Many remarked how 'friendly the judge was'. Others remarked that it was the first time they had ever seen a judge or heard one speak,

never mind a Supreme Court judge, or ever been in a courtroom at that. For that alone this initiative is one which will surely be repeated.

Activities in the Four Courts also included a tour around the building and spontaneous Q&A sessions in courtrooms where staff of the Information Office and service officers answered a long list of questions about the building. Literally hundreds of people left very pleased with an afternoon well spent.

For information about Dublin City Council's 'Walk & Talk' initiative, contact Ronan O'Donnell on 01 2223726 (between 9-5 pm), via email at ronan.o'donnell@dublincity.ie or at the following address: Dublin City Council, Community Development Section, Block 1, Upper Ground Floor, Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin 8. Or visit: www.letswalkandtalk.ie



One section of the crowd inside Kings Inns



The crowd gathered in the Round Hall of the Four Courts



Mrs Justice Susan Denham addressing the crowd in the Four Courts.

'Legal Quarter Walk and Talk' - in the words of the participants;

"Thank you for an excellent day on Saturday, it was very enjoyable, interesting and informative (even if my feet were sore)" - member of the public.

"One of the highlights of the tour was when the renowned historian Pat Liddy read out, to a packed courthouse in Green Street, Robert Emmett's famous 'Speech from the Dock'; a performance which was met by rapturous applause" - legal researcher who went on tour.

"I'd just like to thank you for organising it. I really enjoyed the day as did my sister and her friend. It was good to be able to take the time to have a good look around the courts and think about their history. Usually I'm running from one place to another with files on my mind" - staff member.



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service

COURTS SERVICE
ANNUAL REPORT

2008

WWW.COURTS.IE

HIGHLIGHTS - Court Operations

- 103% increase in cases for recovery of possession of land or premises in the High Court
- 101% increase in cases for specific performance of contracts in High Court
- 63% increase in actions for recovery of debt and 34% increase in actions for breach of contract in High Court
- Applications to appoint Examiners to companies in difficulty increased by 71% with applications to wind up companies up 68%
- 47% increase in judgments registered in the High Court
- 106% increase in applications to High Court relating to certain solicitors matters
- 60% of civil bills issued in the Circuit Court relate to breach of contract or debt collection
- 45% of small claims applications in District Court made using Small Claims Online system
- 92% increase in ejectment proceedings in District Court
- Majority of applications for judicial separation and divorce in both Circuit Court and High Court made by wives
- 66% of maintenance orders in District Court made in favour of unmarried applicants
- 8% decrease in domestic violence applications to the District Court
- 25% increase in applications by unmarried fathers for guardianship of children
- 20% increase in appeals by Director of Public Prosecutions to Court of Criminal Appeal against leniency of sentences with sentences quashed and new sentence imposed in 67% of cases
- 17% increase in new cases in Central Criminal Court
- Trials taking longer in both Circuit Criminal Court and Central Criminal Court
- 26% increase in criminal cases in District Court
- 60% of all criminal cases in District Court relate to road traffic offences
- 58% increase in drug offence cases before District Court
- 92% increase in public order and assault cases before District Court
- 390% increase in sexual offences before District Court
- Hotel licence applications to Circuit Court decrease by 40%
- Applications to District Court to renew pub licences decrease by 33%

HIGHLIGHTS - Modernising the Courts

- High Court sits in new venues around the country
- Capital building programme further improves the stock of Irish courthouses
- Landmark Criminal Courts Complex on schedule for completion in 2009
- Improved family facilities unveiled at Dolphin House in Dublin
- Work continues on reorganisation of District Court Districts
- Well designed and professionally delivered ICT programmes bring court services into the homes of citizens – e.g. Small Claims Online and Online Fine Payment
- Technology makes its way into the courtroom as video conferencing, video viewing facilities and digital audio recording are installed around the country
- Northern Irish court proceedings heard in the State for the first time, as court hearing the civil action taken by the families of the Omagh bomb victims sits in the Four Courts to hear evidence of An Garda Síochána
- Website wins 'Best State Body' category of Irish eGovernment awards for second time
- Courts Accounting Project introduces electronic payment of family law maintenance

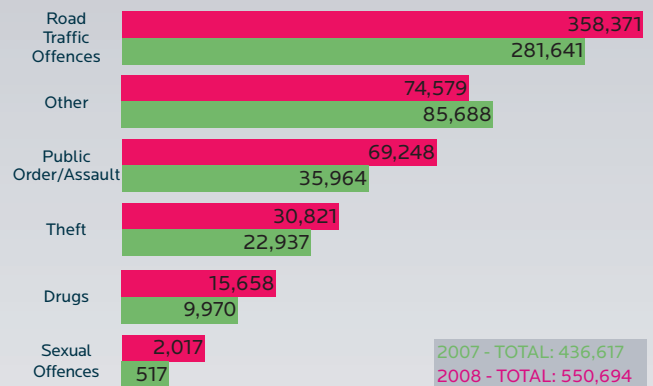
Central Criminal Court - Murder



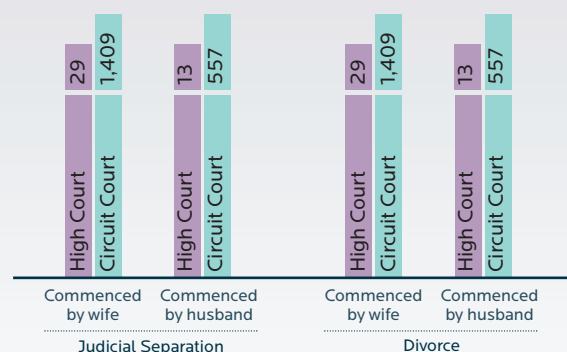
High Court - Possession



District Court - Offences (all cases)



Divorce and Judicial Separation





An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service



The Courts Service Annual Report 2008
is available on our website www.courts.ie

WWW.COURTS.IE

Debt and the courts: dealing with a changing economy



The 'Celtic tiger' economic boom of recent years brought huge increases in all things commercial including buying and selling of property, major infrastructural development, growth in retail, and trade matters generally. It also meant that the courts were very busy dealing with various types of litigation arising from a vibrant economy. So what's it like now that the economy has taken a turn for the worst? **Gerry Curran** examines the effects the downturn is having on the courts and in particular what the increasing demand to recover debt means for court offices:

Changing times mean changing work for the courts. The boom years brought applications associated with the development of property including judicial review of planning decisions, disputes over commercial contracts and a variety of cases resulting from business dealings. The downturn brings different work and comes at a time when there is less money available for a public body such as the Courts Service. The cases coming before the courts these days are

increasingly centred around debt and all that goes with the recovery of money due to financial institutions and other commercial entities. The courts are dealing with an ever increasing number of banks and building societies seeking to recover monies due on foot of mortgages, and creditors of all sorts trying to recover trade and other debts.

This all means extra work for court offices all around the country. The more applications there are to

recover debt, the more court offices must deal with the array of methods that can be employed by creditors and debtors as part of the debt recovery process.

Take a case where a creditor wants to recover a debt for a specific amount. The creditor issues a summons (or other form of originating document) to recover the debt. The court offices are involved from the beginning – from the time the summons is issued throughout the process that leads

Debt and the courts: dealing with a changing economy

to the granting of a judgment - the nature of the involvement depends on whether or not the debtor defends the action. After judgment is granted, the creditor may often need the assistance of the court to obtain payment of the amount due.

For example, he might:

- Ask the court office to issue an execution order which is sent to a county registrar or sheriff
- Register the judgment to let others know that the judgment exists
- Register the judgment as a mortgage on lands in which the debtor has an interest
- Having registered as a mortgage, seek to force a sale of the lands if the debtor doesn't pay the debt
- Apply to have a debtor made a bankrupt for non payment of the debt or, if the debtor is a company, apply to have the company wound up.

Debtors might be required to pay a

debt by instalment in the District Court or find themselves before the court to explain why they should not be sent to prison for failing to comply with an instalment order.

All of these processes along the debt recovery road require input from court staff in the processing of forms, filing of originating documents and affidavits, issuing of court orders and judgments, registration of a variety of documents and even organising auctioneers and valuers if property is to be sold. There were over 136,000 civil cases (including those seeking to recover debt) issued in High, Circuit and District Court offices in 2008. The High Court Central Office took in almost 120,000 documents including summonses, petitions and motions.

The part played by court staff in respect of commercial matters is varied with much of it based on court practices developed over years, if not

centuries. Rules of Court play a huge part in the process with staff required to be familiar with many different rules and large numbers of court forms. The Court Rules for District Court, Circuit Court and Superior Courts (High and Supreme) are available on the Courts Service website (www.courts.ie) ■

Information about the work of the offices of the Courts Service is available on our website www.courts.ie where you can also download the following publications:

- *'Bankruptcy and the Official Assignees Office'*
- *'Bankruptcy and the Examiners Office'*
- *'Mortgage Suits and the Examiners Office'*

POSSESSION ORDERS

One of the areas receiving a lot of public attention recently is possession of property and in particular, possession of residential property. In the High Court applications to recover possession are issued in the Central Office. The Office recorded a 103% increase in new cases for recovery of possession of land, homes or premises in 2008 - 758 in total up from 374 the previous year. Of the new cases issued, 505 were issued in the second half of the year compared to 253 in the first half of the year - indicating that this area is getting busier each month.

High Court registrars also recorded an increase in the number of orders for possession made. There were 238 orders for possession made in 2008, compared to 108 in 2007 and 61 in 2006. The Minister for Justice, Equality & Law Reform has

recently indicated an intention to introduce amending legislation to allow these matters to be dealt with at Circuit Court level to reduce legal costs.

Applications for possession of property in the Circuit Court are issued in the 26 offices of the Circuit Court located around the country. Circuit Court offices recorded an increase in business in 2008 with 225 orders for possession made of which 178 related to residential property.



Debt and the courts: dealing with a changing economy



■ Specific Performance/ Contracts/ Debt

Actions for specific performance of contracts involve a court being asked to compel a party to an agreement, to perform their obligations according to the terms of the agreement e.g. complete the sale, purchase or lease of land, or the sale of goods not readily available in the open market. This area of work increased by 101% last year, with the numbers up from 293 in 2007 to 589 in 2008.

New claims for recovery of debt increased by 63% in 2008 while actions claiming damages for breach of contract increased by 34% going from 592 in 2007 to 791 in 2008. There was a 63% increase in proceedings for injunctions, which increased from 366 in 2007 to 598 in 2008.

■ Judgment

The increase in proceedings for recovery of specific (or 'liquidated') sums was matched by an increase in applications for judgments in default of appearance or defence. These are cases where the debtor does not defend the proceedings.

The High Court Central Office dealt with 1,186 applications for judgment for a liquidated sum in undefended cases in 2008, an increase of 34% on 2007 when judgment was given in 881 such cases.

■ Enforcement of judgments

The High Court issued 1,603 execution orders for the recovery of monies owed in 2008, an increase of 33% on 2007, when 1,208 were issued.

Registration of judgment, regardless of the court in which it is marked, is done in the High Court. In 2008 staff registered 4,886 judgments, an increase of 47% on the 2007 figure of 3,324.

Judgement for a liquidated sum can also be registered as a mortgage by filing an affidavit for that purpose. These affidavits are then lodged with the Property Registration Authority to create a charge on lands or premises owned by the debtor. In 2008 High Court staff dealt with 643 affidavits to register judgments as mortgages, an increase of 36% on 2007 when 471 such affidavits were lodged.

■ Bankruptcy

The Official Assignee in Bankruptcy received eight new cases during the year – seven of which were made in the last six months. The number of bankruptcies discharged practically doubled – 19 compared with ten in 2007.



Debt and the courts: dealing with a changing economy

■ Company and Commercial Matters

Cases commenced for relief under the Companies Acts increased by 10% to 528 in 2008 from 480 on 2007. The Central Office processed 41 applications for the appointment of an Examiner, a 71% increase on the 24 such applications in 2007. There was a 67% increase in applications to wind up companies, from 120 in 2007 to 201 in 2008 resulting in a 68% increase in orders to wind up companies, from 42 in 2007 to 70 in 2008. The

majority of cases were commenced in the last six months of the year with a large number relating to companies in the construction and property sectors.

The business of the Commercial List in the High Court has increased every year since its inception in 2004. New cases entering the list increased by 24%, from 196 in 2007 to 243 in 2008. By 31st December 2008, there had been 701 cases admitted to the List with 21 weeks the average time taken to dispose of cases.



■ The Circuit Court

There were 36,373 civil bills issued in 2008, an increase of almost 20% on the 2007 figure of 30,435, which was a 15% increase on the 2006 figure. Almost 60% (21,304) related to breach of contract or debt collection. Judgments issued by the Circuit Court increased by nearly 24% in 2008, to 10,244 from 8,291 in 2007.

■ The District Court

Civil business increased by 4% in 2008, from 73,533 in 2007 to 77,026 in 2008. Ejectment proceedings increased by almost 92%, from 760 in 2007 to 1,459 in 2008. Ordinary civil bills dealt with increased by almost 40%, from 7,685 in 2007 to 10,733 in 2008.

Instalment orders – where debt can be paid in part weekly or monthly etc – decreased by more than 14%, from 10,842 in 2007 to 9,271 in 2008. Committal orders – where a person is ordered to be imprisoned for refusing to comply with a court order to repay debt or follow an instalment order – decreased by over 28%, from 6,426 in 2007 to 4,620 in 2008. Summary judgments in debt cases – where a person fails to enter a defence or if it appears that the defence is entered purely for delaying tactics – increased for a second year, by 6% in 2008, to 24,873 from 23,389 in 2007.

Law Reform Commission reports on 'Civil Liability of Good Samaritans and Volunteers'

This latest report by the Law Reform Commission was launched by the Attorney General, Mr Paul Gallagher SC recently. The Report was prepared in response to a request by the Attorney General to consider the civil liability of: (a) those who intervene to assist and help an injured person ('Good Samaritans') and (b) voluntary rescuers and other volunteers. The Report includes a draft Civil Liability (Good Samaritan and Volunteers) Bill to cover both Good Samaritans and voluntary rescuers.

The Commission recommends that the proposed legislation should provide for a full defence against a civil liability claim for Good Samaritans and voluntary rescuers, unless there is gross negligence, that is, negligence of a very

high level involving a high degree of risk or likelihood of injury. This 'gross negligence' test is in line with similar laws in place in many countries, including the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The Commission also recommends that, while volunteering organisations would have to comply with the normal rules of civil liability – to take reasonable care in all the circumstances – they should also be able to argue that liability should not be imposed on them if it would not be just and reasonable in the circumstances to do so. This takes account of the overall policy objective of encouraging volunteering activity in Ireland.

The Attorney General also asked the Commission to consider whether the law

should be reformed to impose a positive duty on citizens, members of the caring professions or members of an Garda Síochána or the Defence Forces (when not engaged in duties in the course of their employment) to intervene to assist an injured person or a person who is at risk of such an injury. The Commission recommends that the law should not be changed in this regard, it concluded that it was unlikely that any such duty would promote volunteering or active citizenship. Indeed, the groups consulted by the Commission indicated that imposing any such duty might have the opposite effect.

The full report is available on the website of the Law Reform Commission www.lawreform.ie ■

Getting the message across to our customers

One of the mandates of the Courts Service is to provide information on the courts system to the public. We've come a long way in meeting this mandate. Our staff all around the country provide information to the public every day at public counters, in writing and by phone and email. In addition, we've produced various leaflets and booklets, established an award winning website and introduced several initiatives for schools and community groups.

However we can't be complacent. We need to ask ourselves: is the information we provide getting to the right people? When they get the information can they understand it?

Recently the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) launched 'The Literacy Advisory Service'. The Service aims to help organisations remove literacy-related barriers to customers accessing their services by getting rid of gobbledygook and using plain English.

They have produced a booklet called 'Right from the Start', designed to help organisations maximise the potential of their two most valuable assets – customers and staff.

The booklet explains what it means to be a literacy-friendly organisation and why this is a quality worth achieving. The benefits of being a literacy-friendly organisation, according to NALA include more effective performance from employees with increased morale and fewer mistakes while customers get a more efficient service, communication is easier and there are fewer complaints or repeat calls for information. The organisation benefits from more committed staff, there is lower

staff turnover, better compliance with legal obligations and an improved quality of work.

All staff are responsible for giving information to the public, whether it is in written form: leaflets, letters, emails, pages on the website, verbally through telephone calls or face to face with people at the counter or in court. With that in mind there are a few things that we as individuals can do to help make the Courts Service a more literacy friendly organisation.

Avoid the use of long winded sentences and too much jargon whether you are writing or speaking. It will always be necessary to use the correct terms for legal documents and procedures but remember that many of these terms don't mean anything to people not working in your office. You may need to provide simple explanations or other words which describe forms or processes more clearly.

With 49,000 adults currently attending VEC Adult Literacy Services in Ireland, don't assume that everyone's literacy levels are the same as your own.

Be aware of signals from customers that they may have literacy difficulties and be ready to adapt to their needs and provide information in more than one format.

At the launch NALA also emphasised the need for an organisation to recognise that there may be literacy difficulties among its staff which results in them not reaching their full potential in work.

For more information about adult literacy and about the Literacy Advisory Service contact National Adult Literacy Agency on (01) 855 4332 or see their website www.literacy.ie



Retirements, Retirements, Retirements...

John A. Healy leaves the Court Service

John Healy recently retired after working with the Courts Service for more than 37 years. John was previously a member of An Garda Síochána, serving in Kilmainham Garda Station for approximately 8 years. He became a District Court Clerk in or around 1971. He cut his teeth in Bray District Court, where he worked for 7 years, before transferring to Naas District Court, remaining there for a further 10 years. He then joined the Dublin Metropolitan District Court and worked in the Licensing Office and Summons Office as well as carrying out registrar duties in various courts. For the last nine years, John has been the registrar in Tallaght District Court.

John will be remembered for his gentle kindness and his warm sense of humour. He was vastly knowledgeable of his job, was always helpful to other staff, and was of great assistance to all judiciary. John

will be dearly missed by gardaí and practitioners too.

John had a great sporting career. While growing up in Sligo, he played Gaelic football for his local club and also minors for Sligo, winning a number of titles. He also played football with the Garda Gaelic team and won the Dublin County Championship with them. In Naas, he turned his hand to squash, at which he became the number 1 player in the town!

As the years passed, John's stamina decreased but his appetite for competition remained. He took up golf and, to nobody's surprise, he has excelled at that too. He plays off a handicap of 9 and, now that he has retired, he will be working on reducing this even further. Watch out Rory McElroy! John never neglected the grey cells, and during his lunch break each day, he loved to complete the Irish Independent Cryptic Crossword.



John A. Healy on his last day in Tallaght

John loves to travel to Spain each year to golf. Like the Spanish golfer, Miguel Ángel Jiménez, he loves to relax with a cigar and a glass of red 'Vino'. Hopefully many more successful outings await him on the fairways at home and abroad.

We wish him and his family a long and happy retirement.

A fond adieu to Brendan Minnock



Brendan in storytelling pose

The library of the Taxing Masters Office was packed to the rafters as friends and colleagues of Brendan Minnock gathered recently to wish him well in his retirement.

Warm tributes were paid to Brendan by Mr. Justice Michael Moriarty; Tony Behan, President of Institute of Legal Costs Accountants (ILCA); Tony Quann, Fellow of the ILCA (who had us all in stitches), Taxing Master Charles Moran and Courts Service CEO Brendan Ryan. There was even a letter to Brendan from his fellow county man, An Taoiseach, Brian Cowen!

Brendan's courtesy, professionalism, high standards of customer service, acting, tennis and of course his huge sense of fun were repeatedly referred to in all the

speeches. Who will forget his many spontaneous renditions of musical medleys and poems delivered in a variety of accents from around the world. It's a wonder he ever found time to work! In his own speech Brendan paid tribute to his wife, children and grandchildren and then regaled us with anecdotes from his time in the Courts Service and thanked the many people he worked with over that time. The party then moved into town for Part II of the evening which extended the festivities into the wee hours of the morning. It was a night to remember.

As he rides off into the sunset we wish Brendan, his wife Maura and his constantly extending family a very long and happy retirement.

114 years of experience gone

In the last few months there have been a great number of retirements from the Courts Service. While the retirement of any staff member leaves a gap in an office, no office experienced a body blow like Carrick-on-Shannon District Court. In March Micky Dorrigan retired after 34 years service and then his close colleague Leo Mulvey retired after 39 years service in May. The Southern Region has also had a spate of retirements; the latest to depart to pastures new is Aidan McGaley who retired from Killarney District Court in March after 41 years service.

All of these men will be greatly missed by their colleagues in the Courts Service and many others in the wider legal community: judges, gardaí, solicitors, barristers, local community groups and local reporters. Each of these valuable and experienced members of staff were lauded in court and at functions held in their honours. We hope to bring photos and tributes to them in the next issue of *Courts Service News*.

Farewell to Sean Lane

After 37 years in the Court Service Sean Lane took his leave of us in April. Maura Cushen tells *Courts Service News*:

Sean spent all of this time in the District Court, serving in almost every office in the Dublin Metropolitan District Court. He was Court Registrar in Kilmainham District Court for many years where he served with Judge Gillian Hussey. He had a wealth of knowledge on all aspects of the law and the court's system and will be greatly missed for all the help

and information he gave to both colleagues and to the public.

Sean has been in touch constantly since he retired. He hasn't been idle and has started up a ramblers/mountain walking club with some of his colleagues. They have been out on one "expedition" and I believe there is another one planned for the near future.

We wish him all the luck in the world and good health and happiness in his retirement.



Sean surrounded by colleagues on his last day

Rosemary Lambe Retires...

A large group of well wishers gathered recently at the Porterhouse in Bray to celebrate the occasion of the retirement of Rosemary Lambe from Bray District Court Office. Among those in attendance included District Judge Murrough Connellan, Courts Service colleagues past and present, members of An Garda Síochána, the Probation Service and a large number of local solicitors who were all happy to have the opportunity to wish Rosemary the very best for her retirement.

Rosemary's career in the Civil Service spanned 34 years, all of which were spent working in the courts. She started her career in the Dublin Metropolitan District Court and from there was assigned to the Office which serviced the Special Criminal Court and Central Criminal Court. In 1990, Rosemary transferred to Bray District Court where she worked for the past 19 years until her recent retirement.

Paying tribute to Rosemary's work as a District Court Clerk attached to Bray

Office, Chief Clerk Alan Donnellan made the point that District Court Offices, by their nature, deal with many people who



Rosemary Lambe pictured with her son Patrick (left) and her husband Michael with Holly the dog!

are in very difficult situations which can be emotionally charged and of the need to deal with people in a sensitive and respectful manner, whilst carrying out the functions of that role. "Rosemary always dealt with all callers with extreme sensitivity and tact and notwithstanding the difficulties that they faced, these

callers would have left the Office feeling they had been listened to."

Alan made special note of Rosemary's careful attention to detail in her work commenting that "she would often worry if an unusual order came across her desk or if she thought that a file was incomplete. She has always held the integrity and reputation of the Court as of paramount importance."

Noel Brennan, current Chief Clerk of Cavan District Court who formerly served in Bray with Rosemary also paid warm tribute to her professionalism and skill in dealing with users of the Courts and recalled that he would be gently reminded by Rosemary if she felt that he had been slightly abrupt or impatient with a caller to the counter!

For her part Rosemary thanked all those who had come to bid her farewell and said that she was genuinely taken aback by the kindness of the tributes paid by everybody.

We wish her well in her retirement.

REMEMBERING JUDGE MIRIAM REYNOLDS

The recent death of Judge Miriam Reynolds was received with great sorrow by all in the legal community. Her energy and smile hid the fact that she had suffered from illness for some time. Indeed her attendance and efforts on the Bench belied what must have been a very trying time.

Her tenacity and stoicism in rounding on all the authorities and persons of responsibility who had tragically let down a child and family in a recent high profile sexual abuse case made national and international headlines. 'Without fear or favour' leaped from the pages of those reports.

She was a great supporter of efforts to involve young people in the law and civic society - for many years she was a stalwart as a judge of the National Mock Trials competition, engaging on a very real level with the young people involved.

Judge Reynolds was born in England of Irish parents, the eldest daughter of Mary Reynolds (nee Donnelly), of Mohill Co Leitrim and Glashough Co Monaghan and of Gerard Reynolds a building contractor from Carrick on Shannon, Co Leitrim. She had four brothers Kevin, Gerard, Barry and Kieron. She was married to Frank Buckley and they lived in Mount Merrion with their two sons, Darragh and Cillian.

Having being educated in England and

at the Louis Convent, Monaghan Town, she was admitted to the Bachelor of Civil Law degree (BCL) in UCD in 1979, admitted to the degree of Barrister at Law in Kings Inns in 1981 and practised on the Northern Circuit from 1982 -1998. She was the State Prosecutor for County Donegal from 1990-98. In 1993 she was admitted to the Northern Ireland Bar and to the degree of barrister at law in Northern Ireland and in 1998 was called to the Inner Bar. She then practised in the Central Criminal Court concentrating on murder and rape trials and also appearing regularly in the Court of Criminal Appeal and the Supreme Court.

In keeping with her civic minded traits she was elected a member of the Bar Council in 1999 and was elected hon secretary in 2001 and 2002. She also served as the Chairperson of the Irish Women's Lawyers Association.

Judge Reynolds was appointed a Judge of the Circuit Court in November 2002. Although not assigned to any specific Circuit she had of late been a feature of the Midlands and Northern areas.

The last time I saw and spoke to her was in Donnybrook village after the funeral of Judge Kevin Haugh. She was in fine form, spoke about a few media and legal matters, and looked great - vital almost. Little did I know then, that my next



encounter with her would be to announce to the media that she had died at 52 years of age.

May she rest in peace.

Gerry Curran

She was a great supporter of efforts to involve young people in the law and civic society - for many years she was a stalwart as a judge of the National Mock Trials competition, engaging on a very real level with the young people involved.

Remembering Albert Byrne

In March this year we learned of the passing of Albert Byrne. Albert started his career as a messenger in the High Court and for the 20 years before his retirement in 2000 he was Hall Porter in the Four Courts. In tributes paid to him in *Courts Service News* on the occasion of his retirement we heard of his kindness and courteousness, and the common sense and good humour with which he carried out his duties. Long before information desks and booklets Albert prepared a leaflet about the Four Courts for visitors to the building. Colleagues agreed that "he set an example for us all".

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.



REMEMBERING MR. JUSTICE SEAMUS HENCHY

Mr. Justice Seamus Henchy, who died recently aged 91, was for ten years, a judge of the High Court and for 16 years, a judge of the Supreme Court. His career as a judge constituted a massive, varied and extremely valuable contribution to the Irish judicial system.

As a judge of the High court, as was then usual, he dealt with both civil and criminal cases. In all trials, it was clear that he believed that the maintenance of a calm and cool atmosphere in the court was essential. He applied this principle with complete success in the criminal trial always known as 'the Arms Trial', a case full of tension. In conducting and deciding a case, he identified the legal issues and arguments submitted and then gave his decision in the clearest, brief and precise language.

Seamus was appointed to the Supreme Court in October 1972 and there then commenced the flow of judgments on vital and important points of law which have been so frequently remarked upon as an intensely valuable contribution to the development of Constitutional and other law in Ireland. His judgments all have certain invaluable characteristics. They are first and foremost of brilliant clarity couched in brief and elegant language and are confined to issues directly involved in the particular case falling to be decided.

Seamus graduated from University College, Galway with a PhD in Irish and continued to take an interest in Irish language matters in the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies. From 1948 to 1962, he was a part-time professor of Law at University College Dublin. Not surprisingly, his students found him clear and helpful.

As a practising member of the Bar, Seamus displayed

"He had an excellent, if somewhat reserved sense of humour, which he never lost even on occasions of pressure or tension",

many of the attributes which later were such an important part of his career as a judge, in particular a clarity of expression and consequent brevity. His relationship with his colleagues was excellent, notwithstanding what was always a reserved though very courteous manner. As a judge of the Supreme Court, he continued to display all the above valuable

attributes. It was their application to cases decided in that Court, over a period of 16 years, which has led to universal acknowledgment of the debt of gratitude we owe to Mr. Justice Henchy.



Throughout his career as a barrister and as a judge, he was a splendid colleague. Notwithstanding his success in later years and the extent of praise and acclaim of his judgments, he was at all times, without any sign of vanity. The courtesy which he always displayed in court was repeated in contact with colleagues. He had an excellent, if somewhat reserved

"As a judge of the Supreme Court, he continued to display all the above valuable attributes. It was their application to cases decided in that Court, over a period of 16 years, which has led to universal acknowledgment of the debt of gratitude we owe to Mr. Justice Henchy",

sense of humour, which he never lost even on occasions of pressure or tension.

On his final day as a judge of the Supreme court in 1988, the traditional sitting took place with speeches by the Bar and solicitors expressing praise and gratitude for his career. His reaction in reply was to say that having attended many such ceremonies, he had always been intrigued that no one had availed of the opportunity to tell a judge what they really thought of him at a time when it clearly could do them no harm! This neat remark is a good example of the combination of the sense of humour and sense of humility of Seamus Henchy.

*Mr. Justice Thomas A. Finlay,
former Chief Justice of Ireland*

REMEMBERING JUDGE JAMES SCALLY

Judge James Scally died on Saturday 16th May last. He was a colleague and a good friend. Jimmy was a Chancery Street judge. He loved the bustle, the drama, the humanity of Chancery Street. Since his appointment 10 years ago Court 45 was his court. He looked forward to going to work there every day and regarded it as a privilege to do so. A constant theme during his last painful 18 months was a determination to return to work. He loved the staff in Chancery Street and the feeling was reciprocated. His registrars, Brendan Rice and Joe McLoughlin, and Jimmy were particularly fond of each other.

Jimmy could be trenchant in his views and was capable of being scathing if he thought a practitioner had overstepped the bounds of propriety. He was fierce in his loyalties. He loved Blackrock College, U.C.D. rugby, his friends and family. Judge Miriam Malone, the President of the District Court, and Dolores Moore were utterly beyond approach. He thought the world of Ernie Hanahoe and considered his views more sacrosanct than those of the Chief Justice. When a young colleague once had the temerity to

solicitors and barristers of Chancery Street. In particular he adored the women lawyers. When he talked of them his eyes twinkled with a genuine and a lively appreciation. All of them were always 'beautiful' and 'gorgeous'.

He was a vivid man, and a kindly man. He did not like jailing people. He knew that most people who came before his court were not bad people. They



Jimmy's colleagues learned from him to recognise the dignity of all who come before these courts and our common humanity.

recognise the dignity of all who come before these courts and our common humanity. He donated his body to medical science.

As his friend, Judge Nicky Kearns observed, 'eccentric to the last he refused to attend his own funeral.' Judge Jimmy Scally died before his time. We, his friends and colleagues, acknowledge that he did his duty by his oath of office by doing justice according to the law, with care, with love and with mercy. We miss him.

May he rest in peace.
Judge William Early

He was a vivid man, and a kindly man. He did not like jailing people. He knew that most people who came before his court were not bad people. They were decent people who had made bad decisions

question an opinion of Ernie's Jimmy retaliated with scornful vehemence in colourful Dublinese. He could be mercurial in his moods but he was fun, and his principles and his affections were constant.

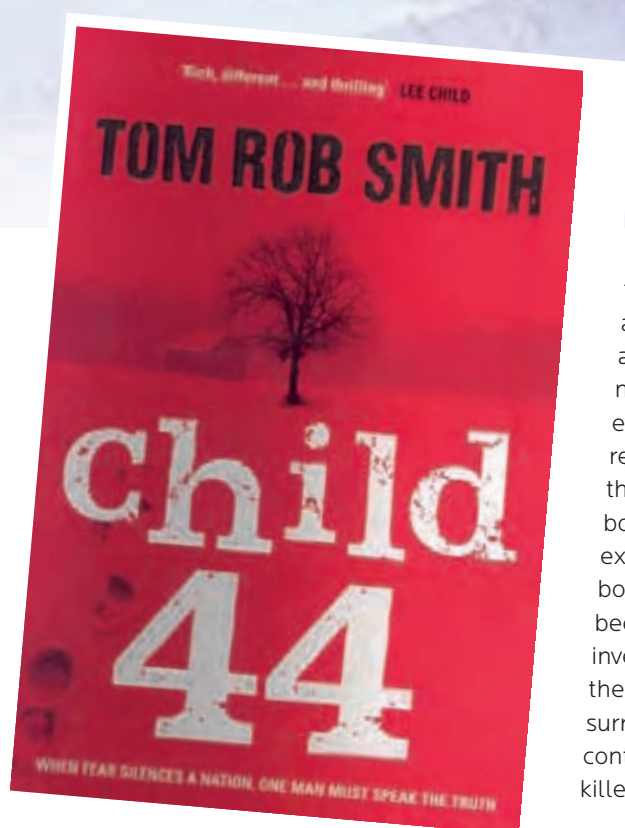
He had an enormous respect for the

were decent people who had made bad decisions. Often they were people who were unable to bear an unsupportable burden. At his core was a religious conviction that the true value of a man could not be judged on earth. Jimmy's colleagues learned from him to

child 44

Published in 2008 and now available in paperback, Tom Rob Smith's first novel attracted immediate critical acclaim. A crime thriller of the first rank, mostly set in 1950's Russia, it also explores the relationship between the Stalinist State and its citizens.

While the novel opens with a prologue set in a village in the Ukraine in 1933, the story then moves to Moscow twenty years later where Leo Stepanovich Demidov, a member of the MGB, the State security force, is sent to investigate the death of a young boy. The boy's father is also a MGB member, though lower ranking than Leo. The boy's father, Fyodor, is convinced that the boy, whose body was found close to the railway tracks, was murdered but, in a Russia in which homicide is unthinkable, Leo has to convince Fyodor and his family that the boy died as a result of a tragic accident, and that claiming the boy was murdered was both futile and highly dangerous. Leo refuses even to examine the boy's body. While Leo has a sixth sense that the death was not due to an accident, he quickly moves on to dealing with another case, this time, involving



State security. During the course of this investigation, he makes a powerful enemy in Vasili, a colleague. Very quickly, Leo is deliberately tested by the MGB and found wanting, he and his wife Raisa are sent to the Urals, where he is assigned to a lowly position in the militia. At this point, two major events occur, Leo discovers that his relationship with Raisa is not what he thought it was, and he discovers the body of a young girl, murdered in exactly the same way as the young boy in Moscow was alleged to have been. Leo now feels an obligation to investigate and sets about trying to find the murderer but has to do so surreptitiously as the State could not contemplate the possibility of a serial killer on the loose.

This is a fast paced gripping tale of a man trying to do right against a background of an all powerful State where trusting someone might lead to jail, a period in the Gulags or even a death sentence. Definitely, a novel to be recommended.

Noel A. Doherty is a Principal Officer in the Courts Service Directorate of Reform and Development.

The Allure of the Algarve

Gerry Curran found much to interest him when he visited Portugal for a wedding recently. He has no hesitation in recommending it as a great holiday destination:

The Algarve must have been a most beautiful place before flatpack golf resorts and apartments blighted its landscape and took from its aura. Yet it is strong enough to survive this and the small towns are still a pleasure to saunter around. From the moment you get off the plane it is apparent that you either rent a car or pay big taxi bills on this stretch of coastline. In a frantic need to catch the European Champions League soccer final we paid €80 for a half hour race to Carvoeiro from Faro airport.

They do motorways well in Portugal, really well, as in they are finished and link busy places where people want to go, rather than just shift traffic jams further down the road a bit. A few more miles on one such stretch of modernity, and another €38 later, we arrived in Lagos. It is a beautiful medium sized town with great squares and restaurants, cliffs on the town side of the harbour, a smashing modern marina area and a beach that stretches forever as in Brittas or Dollymount, except with the sun and facilities right on the beach. The old town has free access to wireless broadband organised by the municipal authorities - as was a Sunday morning marching band in the square.

The architecture of Lagos and of the whole Algarve is a reminder that it was once a separate kingdom from Portugal, and that it had Moorish masters and visitors. Following its joining with Portugal, and trying to copy the great English crusades to the Holy Land, the new Portugal sent a great crusade to Morocco. After defeat and a return in disgrace they concentrated on finding the New World, ruling bits of it, giving bits back, feting and getting rid of a dictator, staying out of WW11, attracting tourists, and building motorways.

The food is gorgeous - especially village roadside cafe type local food - where the local pork is fried with a field of garlic and peppers and potatoes and served spitting hot. One meal

consisted of a raw steak delivered on a roasting hot stone where you tended to it yourself. I would have thought a reduction was in order for having to cook the meal yourself, but alas it seems this is a treat - even if it did come with skinny fries and little carrots, which were reminiscent of the ones in a jar of water. They remained unloved and untouched on the plate.

Back in Carvoeiro for the wedding - that is why I was there - the sea bass and local sparkly wine were the highlight except for the bride's champagne silk dress, figure hugging with a plunging backline, accessorised with a Grace Kelly style headband with a half face, lace fascinator, worn on the tilt. The view as we walked out of the local church was of sun drenched seas, cliffs and coastline - breathtaking and just plain romantic. A statue would have had moist eyes at the spirit of the event.

A day trip to Lisbon cost €52 and included a walking tour, a tram tour of the old quarter and a guided tour on the bus around the main sites. It is three hours drive on the super motorway - but worth it.

The trip back to Faro from Lagos was by train for €6.15 and two very interesting hours of slow train travel, followed by a €9, eight minute taxi ride.

The money I'd have saved if we'd known about this earlier in the week. The Hotel Carvoeiro Sol starts at €34 a night, and the Hotel Residence Lagosmar at €28 per night in early June. Both are three star and tourist hotels - absolutely grand and with a buffet cold breakfast (book single if you are on your own as you get a double anyway).



At the age Christ died
 My father left his heart on the farm
 And headed for Holyhead
 with his beloved wife
 and a one year old version of me
 who my aunt Phil frequently said
 bore an uncanny resemblance
 to Nikita Khrushchev
 though she sometimes said
 that the Russian Premier's bald pallet
 had a better shine than mine
 nor did he cry as often
 as far as she knew

My father carried me in one arm
 and a suitcase in the other
 Never looking back
 as he climbed the Iron Gangway of the Princess Maude
 scraping the last of the Celbridge soil from his shoes

In London he worked the nightshift
 in the Heinz factory
 sweeping up 57 varieties of food
 checking the coolant in the refrigerator
 imagining a January breeze on his face
 as he walked frost covered fields
 of Celbridge and Milltown again.

Later he drove bright red Rootmaster buses
 While I on daytime excursions
 to Hyde Park and Finsbury Park
 with my mother wheeling my pram
 willing me to sleep
 would look out in anticipation
 at every passing bus
 searching for his face among the drivers.

At the Age of Christ

Brian O Tiomain



Summer Evenings

This year's Summer Evening in Smithfield was as always an enjoyable event for everyone.

As well as music from Eoin C. Lynch and David Maguire the guests were treated to the comedic talent of Declan O'Brien of Social and Family Affairs



Former Taxing Master David Bell
and Mr. Justice Richard Johnson.



Ann Mooney & Kathleen O'Connor

Out of the Office with..... **Aisling O'Neill**

Aisling O'Neill, High Court Registrar

How long have you been singing?

I have been singing since childhood. Singing has been a great love of mine which was encouraged by my parents especially my late father and I sang in school and church choirs. When I left school I then went on to study voice training in the Leinster School of Music in Dublin.

What happened next?

I sang competitively for a number of years. I have performed at corporate functions, played the lead roles in many musicals with different musical societies and sang at numerous weddings.

What kind of music do you enjoy most?

I suppose I particularly enjoy singing Irish music and also enjoy unaccompanied singing. In 2002 I did some recording and was the lead vocalist on a Celtic music album entitled '*Sleeping With The Gods Of Love*' which was released under the Dagda record label and while not

released in Ireland enjoyed great success abroad.

What have been your favourite moments of your singing career so far?

While I have many happy memories throughout my singing career two of the most memorable are winning the Thomas Moore Cup in the Feis Maitiú some years ago and also the first time I listened to the final version of the '*Sleeping With The Gods of Love*' album.

What plans do you have for the future?

This year I realised a life long ambition and recorded my own album. The album has been produced by the internationally acclaimed Gerry Simpson who has brought beautiful new arrangements to classic Irish airs. I found the experience of recording my own album, very hard work but immensely rewarding. I am looking forward to the launch in October this



year. It will be held in the in the Distillery Building on Church Street and will benefit the Laura Lynn Children's Hospice Foundation.

■ The main aim of the Laura Lynn Foundation is to establish a Children's Hospice. Aisling chose this charity as Jane McKenna, founder of the charitable organisation, is a former colleague in the Four Courts and as Aisling tells us, "a truly remarkable lady. Jane set up the Laura Lynn Children's Hospice Foundation in 2001 as a result of an enormous personal tragedy in the lives of herself and her husband Brendan which saw them lose both of their precious daughters Laura and Lynn in the space of just two years. Jane has worked tirelessly devoting her time to this very worthy charity which aims to enhance the quality of day to day life for children who are terminally ill". If you would like more information about the Laura Lynn project you can visit

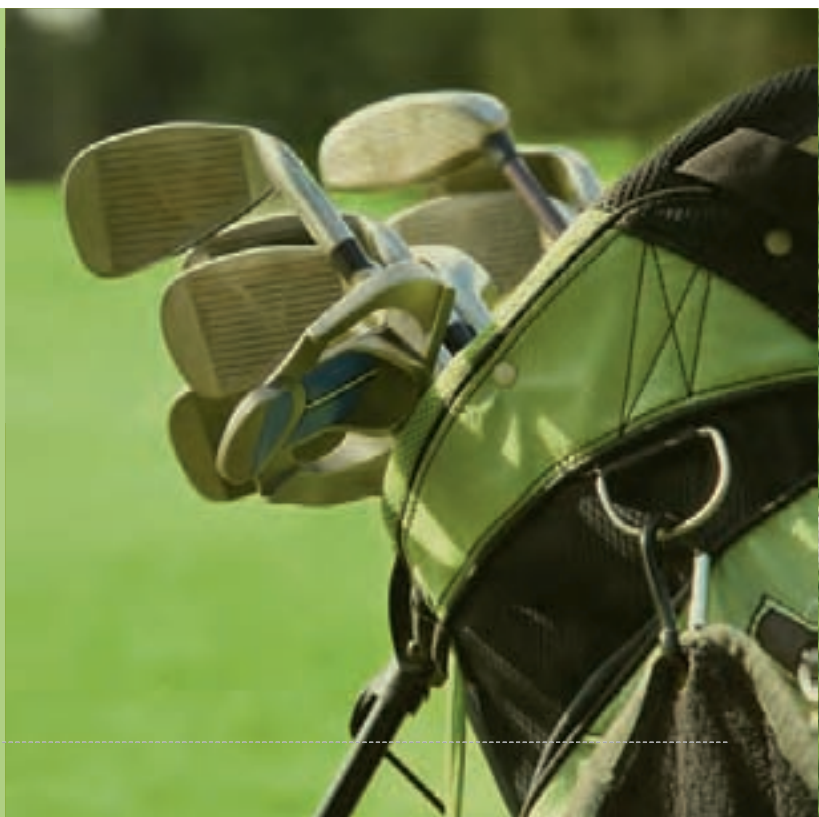
www.lauralynnhospice.com.

Courts Service Golf Society

The last outing was held in Newbridge, Co. Kildare and the winner was Arthur Walker from the Office of Wards of Court with 41 points.

The next outing will be in Craddockstown Golf Club on Thursday 3rd September, 2009 and the Captains prize will be in Malahide Golf Club on 24th September.

Anyone interested in joining the society can contact Rob Rogers at 01 888 6396 or rrogers@courts.ie



Quiz Time

Now that we have no public holiday to look forward to until August, let's see how much we know about other public holidays celebrated around the world. (dates in 2009).

1. Which European country would you be visiting if you were celebrating Independence Restoration Day on 1st December?
2. On what date is Canada Day celebrated?
3. Hari Raya Puasa happens on 21st September – where?
4. What holiday is celebrated in Turkey on 23rd April?
5. On what date do Belgians celebrate their National Day?
6. What holiday are Mexicans celebrating on 16th November?
7. The 8th October is Independence Day in what country?
8. On what date do Jamaicans celebrate National Heroes Day?

Answers to the March Quiz:

1. Silence of the Lambs
2. Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward
3. Trainspotting
4. Jane Austen
5. William Peter Blatty
6. Forrest Gump/Winston Groom
7. Vikas Swarup
8. Oskar Schindler

congratulations to...

Loretta Kearins, Sligo Circuit Court, winner of the March Quiz.

Answers should be sent to courtsservicenews@courts.ie or by hard copy to Fiona Farrell, Information Office, 6th Floor, Phoenix House, Smithfield, Dublin 7.

Can you bend it like Beckham?

Alas Ronaldo has made his decision and opted for Madrid over Smithfield! Now that that deal is done Finn Ryder has more time on his hands to check out any new players interested in joining the Courts Service soccer team. You can contact him at 01-888 6041 or fryder@courts.ie

Results so far:

8th June: Courts Service v LK Shields 1-1

15th June: Matheson Ormsby Prentice v Courts Service 2-0

23rd June: Legal Aid Board v Courts Service 1-1

29th June: Courts Service v Small Fry 2 -4

The remaining matches will be played in the Law Society as follows:

Date	Fixture	Kick Off
16th July	Courts Service v McCann Fitzgerald	6.45pm
28th July	Courts Service v Flynn O'Driscoll	6.45pm
6th August	A&L Goodbody v Courts Service	8.00pm
17th August	Mason Hayes & Curran v Courts Service	6.45pm
18th August	Quarter Finals	6.45pm & 8.00pm
24th August	Semi Final A	6.45pm
25th August	Semi Final B	6.45pm
28th August	Final	6.45pm

Through the lens



Mr. Justice Edwards with teachers and pupils of scoil Mhuire agus Ide, Newcastle West, Limerick



Mock Trial Finals 2009



John Quirke (left) of the Courts service information Office with visitors from Seatown, Swords.



Delegates from the Russian superior Administration meet the Chief Justice.



Amber Hegarty, with proud mum, Catherine O'Leary of the High Court Examiners Office.



Tanzanian judges with Prof. William Binchy, Trinity College and Noel Rubotham, Director of Reform and Development.