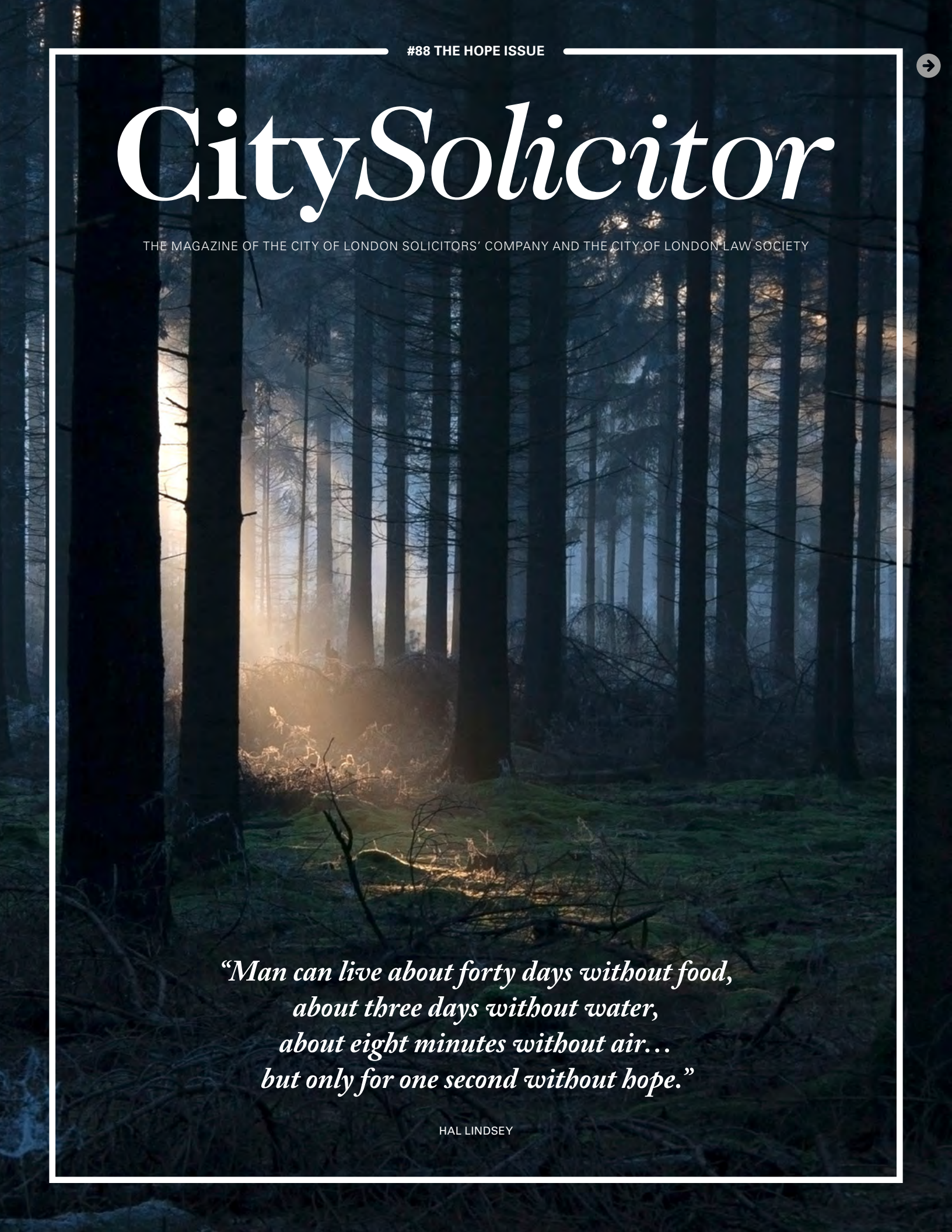
#88 THE HOPE ISSUE

CitySolicitor

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CITY OF LONDON SOLICITORS' COMPANY AND THE CITY OF LONDON LAW SOCIETY



"Man can live about forty days without food,
about three days without water,
about eight minutes without air…
but only for one second without hope."

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editor's letter



With the advent of Spring, there is always a feeling of great hope and possibility. So, we are dedicating this issue to precisely that theme of hope which is probably the one thing that keeps us going no matter what else happens.

With an election looming, we ask three eminent tax experts what they hope could and should happen when the next government is elected.

We examine the content and substance of the Global Law Summit to see if it really lives up to the hope that it will be the Magna Carta upgrade.

We talk to people who have achieved the seemingly impossible, and who did it by never giving up on the hope that anything can be achieved.

And we look at all the things you should be hoping to do in your spare time this Spring, in London.

You will notice our magazine, in its new guise, is still evolving. We are listening and responding to your invaluable comments and feedback – in the hope that we can make it increasingly better.

So, be sure to keep your suggestions coming in.



John Abramson, Editor

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Three leading tax experts talk about their 'wish list' if they were looking after the Exchequer post election.

IT SEEMS THAT GIVEN A CHOICE OF GEORGE OSBORNE OR ED BALLS, MOST PEOPLE FEEL IT'S THE SHORT STRAW OR THE SHORT STRAW SO WE PUT A FEW OF OUR OWN CANDIDATES INTO THE MIX TO SEE WHAT TAX CHANGES THEY WOULD HOPE TO MAKE IF THE MANTLE WAS THEIRS.


Simon Yates


Alasdair Douglas


Bradley Phillips

Simon Yates Chair of the CLLS Revenue Law Committee and a partner at Travers Smith, isn't that concerned about who is going to win the next election. Well, at least from the perspective of the future of the tax system.

What he really is hoping for is "something wider; a strong government, with a big enough majority to give it the confidence to think long term so it doesn't see the need to court short term poll boosts by implementing measures that are little more than political stunts but are highly damaging to perception of the UK (ATED, Diverted Profits Tax)."

In that (highly unlikely) scenario and assuming Mr Yates was the Chancellor, what would he do?

"In an ideal world, I would rip up quite a lot of the system and start again. But we are not colonising Mars and putting in place an all-new tax regime which can be designed with an eye to historic experience.

If we make big changes there will almost certainly be big losers, and it's critical to treat them fairly which means a gradual transition giving time to adjust."

But the one thing Mr Yates would dearly love to do is "get rid of national insurance." The idea of NI as a contribution entitling one to benefits may still technically exist, but economically it's gone. "NI has long been used as a stealth tax by Chancellors unprepared to acknowledge that they are raising tax on income (and perhaps also unwilling to raise income tax on pensioners who vote in far greater numbers than their younger brethren)."

Yates believes that from a wider social perspective it is wrong to tax income from employment at higher rates than any other form of profit, which is the consequence of the NI system. "The less well off do not have capital to invest to yield gains, interest and dividends: all they can do to make profit is work. And yet, whatever income level we are talking about, this profit from work is taxed more heavily than anything else, holding back the economic advancement of the capital poor in favour of the capital rich, and so contributing to the entrenchment of inequality."

He feels employer NI contributions are even more pernicious than employee ones as they are invisible to the great majority of taxpayers, but take an immense amount out of the economy. "Where is the sense in charging employers a fee to employ people? If employer's NI was reduced, more people would have jobs and those that had jobs would be paid more."

Employee NI could be eliminated relatively easily and revenue-neutrally by shifting the burden to income tax, although the resulting dramatic increase in rates would be politically challenging (emphasising that the true cost of NI is not appreciated).

Some transitional relief for pensioners would also be necessary as absent this they would face a sudden material increase in rates.

Employer's NI is more of a challenge since it isn't obvious where the replacement revenue should be collected from. This would need to be eliminated over time, effectively by focusing all cash available for tax cuts on this. Chancellor Yates would announce that this would be done, even if it ultimately took a decade or more (as would probably be the case).

Asked if Mr Yates would introduce a mansion tax he is emphatic in saying "absolutely not". He disagrees with the concept of wealth taxes as he doesn't think it is fair to tax the value of illiquid assets which may well not be cash generative. However if we are to have wealth taxes, he's clear that they should apply to all wealth, net of borrowings. Taxing one subset of wealth in an unusual way is damagingly economically distortive: taxing a subset of a subset (such as valuable houses) is more so. There are real fairness issues within the mansion tax.

It doesn't seem right that a person with a £2m house and no mortgage should pay the same tax as a person with a similar house and a £1.5m mortgage. But you couldn't tax the net value, as then people would keep their mortgages in place when they didn't need them in order to avoid the tax. It also seems unfair that a person with two £1.5m houses pays no tax but a person with a single £3m house would pay a lot. However if you wanted to aggregate values, you have to address the issue of connected owners (eg a husband and wife have one house each in their names) – manageable, but complex, and vulnerable to evasion.

The tax would be labour intensive for HMRC as it would require a team to vet the values volunteered by taxpayers, which in most cases won't have been established by arm's length sale transactions and so can be expected to be pitched low. Far more tax could be raised if this resource was deployed elsewhere in HMRC (most obviously in compliance/enforcement). Also if the current Labour proposal to index-link the tax thresholds to local property price inflation was adopted, huge complexity and arbitrary outcomes would result. Who chooses the regions within which property inflation is deemed to be the same? Who monitors that inflation?

There's a strong case that UK property is under-taxed (mainly due to the private residence CGT exemption), but the mansion tax isn't the answer. It's unfair, unduly complex and highly inefficient. A comprehensive revaluation of UK property for council tax purposes and the introduction of some new bands at the top end would be a better if still imperfect answer, but (as with NI) our leaders run scared from the implications.

Also one suspects that a mansion tax is preferred to council tax changes in order to keep the cash in central government's coffers and out of the sticky hands of councils, despite pious words about devolution. So, in short a Chancellor who believes in fairness, in honesty, and in taking the time to get things right rather than use them for political gain. Now that really would be a rarity.

"If we make big changes there will almost certainly be big losers, and it's critical to treat them fairly which means a gradual transition giving time to adjust."

Our next Chancellor-in-waiting, Alasdair Douglas, Chair of the City of London Law Society, Chair of Aviate Global LLP and formerly Senior Partner at Travers Smith, was emphatic that, rather than introducing new bills, he would, to the contrary, ensure there was no more legislation for quite a long period of time.

He feels very strongly that "for too many years, there has been too much legislation and way too much time is wasted thinking about it, trying to knock it together and then trying to implement it".



He says "the sheer volume and bulk of legislation is crazy" and so with him as our Chancellor it would stop. He would leave it for a few years – bar (well of course there are some exceptions!) anti abuse legislation and international taxation. Whilst he accepts that "there will always be avoidance, blatant devices should be stopped". He says that "tax legislation is not complete and is exploited because the law allows it to be." He believes the furore around international tax is even more important. Whilst he doesn't think "the government have been asleep at the wheel" on this one he (like Mr Yates) considers there is still much to be done but it is a highly difficult and complex matter to deal with.

Global trade has always existed but laws governing its taxation are all pre-internet, very old fashioned and not relevant in today's world. So Mr Douglas would instigate a major debate on it to recognise the opportunities involved. He also discussed the interesting developments that could result from the recent devolution of certain powers to Scotland. He thinks it is too much to hope that Scotland will significantly reduce taxation but it might. And, if he were Chancellor, he would. He believes that it would be a great way of luring successful Scotsmen (like himself?) back home. He draws comparison with Margaret Thatcher's government reducing taxes from 60 to 40% and the huge affect that had attracting people back to the UK. He knows it is a radical approach but believes measures such as "tax holidays" could attract great people into Scottish businesses – although the "pressure from the Treasury would be high not to do this".

Like Mr Yates, Mr Douglas also believes it doesn't really make much difference which party wins the election saying that "despite their idealogical differences, in terms of total tax take there is unlikely to be any real difference between them". He cites how whichever party has been in power, tax has always been between 35 and 37% of GDP.

"Tax legislation is not complete and is exploited because the law allows it to be."

So, a Chancellor that would make Scotland a more attractive place to work – and live. Considering how many successful business people and professionals living in England are Scottish, that would make quite an impact.

Our last "chancellor" is ex Herbert Smith Freehills LLP Head of Tax and now Director in the Investment Management Tax Practice of PwC, Bradley Phillips. Like Mr Douglas, he believes there is just too much tax legislation.

He talks of it being a "ridiculously complex system" although admits that paradoxically that's why he enjoys his work. He says in 1991 when he started as a tax lawyer there were three huge volumes of legislation and related materials to read and digest. Now there are eight. With such a high level it is impossible to have any sort of detailed knowledge which is why practitioners often focus on one area – but even then it is becoming increasingly unmanageable. He would dearly like to see a less complex and clearer tax system, one that is more understandable for the man on the street.

He sees this growth of legislation inevitable with ever changing governments. Each one to some extent changes, amends, deletes and replaces what was previously done. With the introduction of new legislation too, it is hardly surprising the volume has grown to such crazy proportions. Fixing it though is not that simple. "The only way to fix it is to start again – and that's impossible." Mr Phillips refers to the tax simplification process which started in the 90's. In order to make legislation more simple, a number of statutes were rewritten, so that just added to the problem and sheer volume.

He says the Office of Tax Simplification which has been running for a few years now is getting rid of some redundant provisions. But it's a long, long process and with everything that is eliminated, way more is being added.

"To really start afresh means working with a whole new set of principles, not merely rewriting. But as tax is political, is there a will to do it? If everyone was taxed in the same way and at the same rate, then it would be simple – but it means a huge change that probably nobody would ever agree to."



Interestingly, PwC currently have a campaign around developing "A tax system fit for the Future". The PwC research has shown that the man on the street and businesses are united in what they want out of the tax system; that it be simple to understand and navigate, that there is transparency in how the money is raised and spent, that it is fair, there is certainty, that it doesn't punish and doesn't discourage."Mr Phillips sees fewer taxes as the way to go. Combining NI with Income Tax is an obvious example. The original purpose and relevance of NI is no more; he agrees with Yates that it is really an income tax. So let's make it that.

This is a way of simplifying with no loss of revenue that he believes most people are fundamentally in agreement with. As Chancellor, Mr Phillips believes income tax should never be raised beyond 50%. He says the current combined top income tax and NIC rate of 47% is palatable, but over 50% not so. He supports the reduction of corporation taxes to make the UK competitive. He wouldn't personally introduce a mansion tax; he is adamant the way to raise more revenue is with fewer taxes, not more; and that they should be primarily through the main taxes – income tax, corporation tax and VAT.

So, three very different men – but ultimately are they saying very different things? Get rid of NI. No mansion tax. Cut back on legislation make it simpler. Would you vote for one as opposed to the others?

Or, is the truth that actually, like in the real world, ultimately there is very little to choose between them? If we accept that the best change would be to start afresh, yet realise that is impossible, where does that leave us? CS



Magna Carta *1215.*

Global Law Summit *2015.*

2295
delegates.

110
countries.

90
ministers and Attorney Generals.

800
year anniversary.

1
common hope:
the continuation of the rule of law as the foundation for society, business, economic growth – and our future.

Sir David Wootton, Co-Chair, Global Law Summit and Partner at Allen and Overy
"English law and our courts set the standard and the event has attracted the attention of many countries keen to hear more about how they can bring the value of law to their own countries."

The Rt Hon The Lord Thomas of Cymgiedd, Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales
"When it comes to the Rule of Law, not only should we practise what we preach, but preach what we practise. Which is why we are here today, to discuss how the principles of Magna Carta can continue to shape us."

The Rt Hon Chris Grayling, MP
"No change is seldom an option."

Carey Mulligan, Global Ambassador of War Child* and actress.
"In some places there is no rule of law. No habeus corpus. No Magna Carta. Only the rule of the gun. In those places, we need to help deal with the aftermath."

Boris Johnson, Mayor of London
"Every day in this city, the organ of law is upheld with such impartiality that it amazes the world."

"The rule of law that exists in a vital sense in our courts and in our legal system is recognised around the world to conform to the very highest intellectual standards and which is free from any taint or corruption of any kind."

"The liberal spirit of the Magna Carta is alive throughout the English speaking world – and not just in its ancestors, Jimmy Carter and Helena Bonham Carter."

Sean Cottrell, CEO LawinSport
"Sport is more than just money. It can change towns, cities, countries in ways that is immeasurable."

Dominic Grieve, MP
"As a lawyer, I am commended for brevity. As a politician, obfuscated."

Eric Holder, US Attorney General
"No one should be immune from the law. Or its protection."

"Despite the gulf of time, the sweep of eight centuries, the ravages of global war, yet the principles of Magna Carta endure"



The Rt Hon Lord Igor Judge

former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales

"The Magna Carta and the code of law it represented was vested with the status of a living instrument. Its clauses have been adapted and developed and have provided the foundations of our system. It is a living instrument that is held in great veneration. It is the banner we turn to when our liberties are threatened. When it was sealed in June 1215 nobody would have bet a penny on its survival. Its ideals of justice, rights, the rule of law and equality before the law should never be taken for granted. We are in the 801st year of the Magna Carta. In another 800 years from now we must have another celebration. Most of us won't be here then. But those of us who are here today should make sure it continues as a healthy, robust, wonderful and exciting principle."

What the speakers said

Angel Gurria, Secretary General, OECD
"We must embrace innovation but also accept that it takes time to be adopted by an international community."

"There should be nowhere to hide for tax cheats."

Karim Massimov, Prime Minister of Republic of Kazakhstan
"My government aims to become a full member of the OECD. We respect the Rule of Law. As Cicero said, we are all servants of the law so that we may be free."

Cherie Blair, CBE, QC, Founder and Chair, Omnia Strategy
"Values are not about black letter law. They are much broader. They are in the DNA of what we do and how we carry it out. We cannot segregate what is going on in the Law Courts from how it's going to look to people who aren't lawyers."

"Brand reputation is a precious thing and if it suffers locally, that will not go unnoticed internationally. Today people are more obviously interested in the ethics of a company, as are investors."

Jonathan Drimmer, Vice-president and Deputy General Counsel, Barrick Gold Corporation
"Human rights are like seat belts. They aren't just a good idea. They're the law."

Ursula Wynhoven, General Counsel and Chief, Governance and Social Sustainability at UN Global Contact
"Today, lawyers are not just asked to advise on what is legal but also what is acceptable."

Professor John G Ruggie, Former UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Business and Human Rights
"6 weeks before the iPhone 5 was due to be delivered, Steve Jobs decided he didn't like the screen and asked for it to be changed. The delivery date didn't change. The price was't increased. No way was that going to happen without violating standards."

The Rt Hon Jeremy Wright, QC MP, Attorney General
"The rule of law is fundamentally more important than liberty or democracy."

"No part of the Rule of Law makes a government's life easy. it is a fetter and that is how it should be. But I see it not as a straitjacket but as a badge of honour, not something that is reluctantly accepted but rather championed both here and abroad."

Adam Lewis, QC, Barrister, Blackstone Chambers
"Where there is an international law of sport, it's called different things by different people. One is lex ludicrous because it isn't really a legal system, it's being invented as we go along. But that's not really fair. It does draw from the fundamental principles and attempts to do what the original Magna Carta did in that basic norms should apply across the board. But it's in a nascent stage. We're running up that hill to Windsor, so to speak, with the ink still wet."

Andrew Caplen, President, The Law Society of England and Wales
"The Magna Carta is rightly regarded as the foundation of the Rule of Law. but that is an empty concept if there is no access to justice."

*War Child is the charity that delivers immediate safe havens to children in war zones, that supports their right to education and creates sustainable lives free from violence. #JusticeMeans #LawyersforWarChild

& the delegates

"This country already has a great reputation and to see what we are further capable of will seal that. This is great for UK PLC."







Sariya Alhady, Oman Lawyers Association
"The Summit offers a great opportunity to find out what is happening in Europe, to become more aware of developments and to be able to apply them in countries such as mine."

Ali Awale, Somaliland Mission
"We are delighted to be taking part in this 800 year celebration and to be able to witness it first hand. We are hoping this is the first step towards the world being fair with us and internationally recognising Somaliland and the rights of its people."

HH Prince Sultan b Jalawi Al Saud, Legal Adviser Saudi Arabia Embassy
"Instead of just talking about things in speeches, we will apply what we hear and make it a reality. My country is a relatively new one. I am hoping that by taking some of the UK legal principles and applying them, we can help people in Saudi."

Sohyun Hong, UCL, Chevening Scholarship
"Unless lawyers change with technology, they will become expendable. Already online litigation exists. This Summit has opened my eyes to what's needed and what I must do to survive."

Barry Holland, President of the Notaries Society
"This country already has a great reputation and to see what we are further capable of will seal that. This is great for UK PLC."

Zlatina Ruseva-Savova, Managing Partner of Ruseva-Savova Law Firm, Bulgaria
"This is a fabulous event; full of opportunity to network and learn and transfer knowledge between nations."

Edmond Ibrahimi, Kings College London, Chevening Scholarship, Albania
"This Summit opens your minds in many corners you never even thought existed. You get to see the top players and find out what's going on and that means you can see how you can adapt to improve your own country. It couldn't have been hosted in a better place than London as it is the only city in the world that is truly global. Last evening, I was int roduced to Her Majesty The Queen who wanted to know who had a better legal system, England or Albania."



Just as at the time of the Magna Carta itself when there were two opposing sides, so it is true today.

As the Global Law Summit begun, so the Not the Global Law Summit was marching from Runnymede to Westminster.

The NOT group are protesting against the Summit for celebrating Britain as the bastion of the rule of law when, in their eyes, "the Government is denying justice to the poor by slashing legal aid and attempting to shield itself from scrutiny by restricting judicial review and pledging to repeal the Human Rights Act".

Their mini summit culminated in the actress Maxine Peake reading from the original Magna Carta, something which the NOT group claims is not referenced at the Summit itself.

(Dominic Grieve, MP would dispute this as he said "almost everyone at the Summit has been able to quote a part of the Magna Carta in their commentaries".)

As Mayor Johnson so aptly put it, "only in London is the right to protest so sacrosanct." CS

LOND ON

FOR THOSE HOPING TO RELIVE THEIR YOUTH, YOU ARE IN LUCK. YOUR "MUST DO" LIST OF UNMISSABLE THINGS IN LONDON THIS SPRING (AND A FEW DECADES AGO!).





THEATRE.

There seems to be a (much deserved) revival of early David Mamet plays in London recently, an opportunity for those too young to have seen them first time around to find out what they have been missing and a treat for the rest of us to get another bite of the cherry. Last year we saw a revival of the Pulitzer prizewinner and Oscar nominee's play *Speed The Plow.* A superb play which in 1988 bizarrely cast Madonna, not best known for her acting ability, in the lead role. This time, the casting was equally (perhaps even more?) suspect, with Lindsey Lohan playing the part of Karen. Yet despite any dubious acting, Mamet's words sting through, blistering and burning, always leaving an impact. This year, it is the turn of American Buffalo, a tale of three small time crooks planning one almighty heist. As with all of Mamet's plays, themes of loyalty and greed are under scrutiny, as in essence are the flaws of mankind generally. And this time, the casting directors have really excelled in securing Damien Lewis (Brody in Homeland, as if you didn't know) in the lead.

American Buffalo will be playing at the Wyndham's Theatre from 16 April until 27 June 2015

MUSIC.

It's not just plays that are doing revivals at the moment. Last year we saw two artists nobody ever really thought would perform again doing sell-out gigs to almost hysterical audiences. Kate Bush and Cat Stevens thrilled their audiences just as much as they had done four decades before – and probably pocketed enough never to have to do it again.

This year Fleetwood Mac are following suit. Songbird, Christine McVie (nee Perfect) has come out of a self-imposed exile (seems to be common amongst musicians, particularly female ones) to complete the line up that is undergoing a world tour. Although tickets all sold out within minutes, rumours (excuse the pun) are that more will be added – so keep an ear open and don't miss out.

Fleetwood Mac are playing the 02 on 27/28 May and 22/24/26/27 June





FILM.

Few of us will not have read Thomas Hardy's *Far From The Madding Crowd*, and most of us will have seen the classic 1967 film directed by John Schlesinger and starring Julie Christie, Peter Finch and Alan Bates.

Nominated for an Oscar, it is hard to imagine trying to follow this. But last year, on the 140th anniversary of the novel, a new version was finally attempted starring Carey Mulligan as the headstrong Victorian beauty, Bathsheba Everdene.

It's hard to imagine two actresses more different than Christie and Mulligan so it is probably fair to assume this is a very different interpretation, rather than an attempt to copy.

Far From The Madding Crowd will be released in the UK mid May

FASHION AND ART.

If you were a fan of Alexander McQueen (the original as opposed to Sarah Burton) then you are in for a double treat this spring.

Firstly, Savage Beauty, which was originally shown at the Metropolitan Museum in New York in 2011 and became one of the Museum's top 10 visited exhibitions, opens in London's V&A in May. McQueen loved London and said "it is where my heart is and where I get my inspiration" so it is apt that the first retrospective of his work in Europe is here. It is an extravagant showcase of McQueen's most exciting and forward looking work spanning from his graduate collection in 1992 right through to his unfinished A/W collection in 2010. The work will be presented as dramatically as his runway shows.

At the same time, at Tate Britain, between 10 March and 17 May is Nick Waplington/Alexander McQueen: Working Process. This collaboration documents with Waplington's photographs behind the scenes and the workings of McQueen's last ever show *The Horn of Plenty* in 2009. But if you think its just about clothes, think again. The fashion photographs are juxtaposed with brutal shots of landfills and recycling plants echoing the themes of destruction and renewal that were the basis of the collection. CS

INTERVIEW

It's the year of books. Mark Zuckerberg says so. But for Ann Morgan that is so last year.



Just when you thought reading was becoming a thing of the past, along comes Mark Zuckerberg launching a new online bookclub, A Year Of Books, and making books and reading totally on trend again. Zuckerberg's first pick, "The End of Power" by Moses Naim sold out in literally hours after it was chosen.

But how realistic is Zuckerberg's resolution to read a book a fortnight throughout 2015, not just for him but for the 150,000 people who "liked" his book club page?

Let's be honest.

For most of us reading a handful of books a year, usually whilst on a beach or if we are sick and off work, is the most we can hope for.

Not so for Ann Morgan, a name you might not have heard of (yet), but who has been pioneering "A Year of Books" in different ways long before Zuckerberg jumped onto the bandwagon.

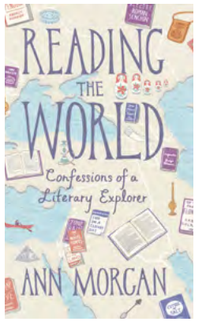
CitySolicitor met Ms Morgan at Grosvenor Books in Ebury Street, her venue choice; such is her lust for literature that even when being interviewed she is happiest surrounded by hardbacks and paperbacks.

Not a book a fortnight, not even one a week – but one from every single country in the world.

She has just completed a year of books. Not a book a fortnight, not even one a week – but one from every single country in the world.

How does one even begin to formulate that list, or quantify that statement?





Reading the World, Confessions of a Literary Explorer is available in Hardback and ebooks. From all major retailers.

Left: Where it all began. Ann reading her first book in Coney Island, New York.

Ms Morgan chose to use the United Nations recognised list, 194 at the start of her year (2012) then 195 by the end of it. She then added in Palestine. And Taiwan. And one last territory to represent the rest of the world (voted for by her blog followers).

So that's more or less 200 books in 52 weeks. And not just reading the books but blogging about them too. How did this crazy journey begin?

"A few years ago I resolved to do a "Year of Reading Women" as beforehand I had tended to ignore female authors and one of my blog followers from America mailed me to tell me to read Cloud Street by Tim Winton. I questioned "why" as it was not written by a woman but it got me thinking about doing another "Year of…" and this time doing a year of books from every country.

I wasn't totally sure about the idea, and didn't really have a clue where to begin so I started asking people what I should read. Within hours friends were sharing suggestions, then friends of friends got involved and then it spread to people I didn't know at all. After four days, a woman from Kuala Lumpur got in touch with me to say she was sending me a book by post. If a complete stranger 6000 miles away was prepared to do that, I knew I just had to do this".

Asked which was her favourite, she said too many to name but spoke very passionately about one; *An African in Greenland* by Tete-Michel Kypomassie from Togo. One of 26 children (his father had eight wives), he was out collecting coconuts when a python appeared and startled him so much that he fell out of a tree and had a fit. He was really ill and his father believed the only way he could be cured was by the high priestess of a python cult deep in the forest. She could and she did; but her price was high.

She wanted the child become part of the cult and that meant a seven year initiation of living in the forest with the snakes.

Everything was agreed and Kypomassie went back to the village to recuperate before starting his seven year sentence when he happened to read a book about Greenland. He discovered this magical (to him) place had neither snakes nor trees and so it became his dream to live there, safe from all that had jinxed his life thus far. As soon as he was well enough he ran away and spent twelve years travelling to get to his dream destination where he happily lived for several years and became a writer.

So that's more or less 200 books in 52 weeks. And not just reading the books but blogging about them too.

When Ms Morgan wrote about this incredible story, it caught the attention of a film producer who bought the rights and is now hoping to put this incredible tale on the big screen.

This story is just one step on the road Ms Morgan travelled. She documented it all in her blog (see link below) but even after reading 197 books and blogging about it all, that still wasn't enough for Ms Morgan.

She then wrote a book which is "part memoir, part literary criticism and part social commentary" based on everything she experienced in her year long journey. The book "Reading The World, Confessions of A Literary Explorer", which is published by Harvill Secker, Random House, was released in February and is available in hardback and e-book online and through all major book shops.

Sounds like Mr Zuckerberg had better get his reading skates on to even have a hope of catching up with Ms Morgan. CS

ayearofreadingtheworld.com

Fox makes it to Brighton



On the first floor of the Pall Mall Clubhouse of The Royal Automobile Club there is a wonderful picture showing the Patron of the Club, Prince Michael of Kent, driving over Westminster Bridge. He is driving a Mors.

I have long-admired that picture in the hope that one day I might have an opportunity of driving a car in the annual Veteran Car Run from London to Brighton. The Veteran Car Run, organised each year by The Royal Automobile Club, is the world's longest running motoring event.

Last November, my wish came true. I had an opportunity of driving of the very car shown in the picture for part of the Run. It is a Mors built in 1901, is owned by the Royal Automobile Club and sports the registration number, RAC 1.

Emile Mors was a successful French motor manufacturer at the turn of the century. The first Mors models were built in 1895 and designed by the brilliant Henri Brasier. The business was initially successful; the cars made by Mors were larger and faster than most cars of the period. Then Brasier left to join a competitor.

The Mors which I drove had a 4 cylinder 10 HP engine with Tonneau bodywork. With five of us on board, we were able to cruise at almost 50 mph when conditions were favourable.

Unfortunately there was only a short period during which conditions were favourable. On Sunday, 2 November 2014, it rained hard for much of the day. I had been warned: because the car has no roof or windows, nor even a windscreen, the occupants get very wet when it rains. So I opted to wear my warmest and most waterproof clothing, an ancient red and blue ski outfit. The result created a certain amount of amusement; I was subsequently told that, short of period tweed costume, the best choice for the London to Brighton Run is modern motorcycling gear. Not that I have ever ridden a motorcycle.

Driving the Mors was a challenge for two reasons. The first was mechanical. The layout of the controls is completely different from that in a modern car. Whilst the clutch is on the left, the foot brake is on the right and the accelerator is in the centre. There is also a hand throttle and a mixture control on the steering wheel. The gearstick sits to the right of the driver, just within reach but actually outside the bodywork of the car. It was the gearbox that caused me the most difficulty.

Despite two hours of practice a couple of days beforehand, I never really mastered the gearbox. On three or four occasions I managed to stall the engine. My excuse is that I have driven only cars with an automatic gearbox for the last 20 years! Tony, our on-board mechanic, was fortunately both patient and good-humoured. Each time I stalled the engine, he jumped out, turned the engine over on the starting handle and told me not to worry.

The other challenge was the weather. At times it rained so hard that I was completely unable to see the road. Unfortunately I had not thought to bring my high-tech, fan-assisted, ski goggles.

But the whole experience was tremendous fun.

As is now traditional, the Run started in Hyde Park with the tearing up of a red flag. This is to commemorate the 1896 Act which raised the speed limit from 4 mph to 14 mph and abolished the requirement for cars to be preceded by a man on foot with a red flag. We left Hyde Park at dawn, shortly after 7.00 a.m. The route took us through the centre of Admiralty Arch – another once-in-a-lifetime experience!

The mid-way checkpoint was at a Honda dealership in Crawley. Now Crawley is not a place I have ever visited before. It is not a particularly glamorous venue but the hot drinks and croissants provided by Harrods (just one pain au chocolat, Mr Fox) were most welcome.

We finally made it to Madeira Drive soon after 1.00 p.m. The impact of the mulled wine which greeted our arrival was instantaneous but the elation of completing the Run has lasted for months. CS

*Past Master Ronnie Fox is the Motoring Correspondent of City Solicitor

INTERVIEW

How acceptance of "what is" and hope of "what can be" are far from mutually exclusive but crucial bedfellows.

Mark Pollock has a cross or two to bear. To quote him he is "blind, paralysed, bald and Northern Irish". But these are merely the adjectives that describe him, not the things that define him. His story is the stuff movies are made of, the sorts of movies where you think this could never happen in real life.



Born in Belfast, from the moment Mark could walk, he wanted to compete and race. But his passion to be right in the middle of things was somewhat sidelined by a detached retina in his right eye at 5 which lost him his sight in that eye.

At 8, he suffered another detachment, this time in his left eye and his mother brought him to Moorfields where he had two operations which saved the sight in that eye. He managed to continue with his life, not allowing his eyes to be a problem. He cycled, passed his driving test, was studying Business Studies and Economics at Trinity College in Dublin and actively doing the milk round pursuing a career in banking in London.

He captained his university boat club and was rowing for Ireland. Then at 22 he experienced a blurring of vision that he knew only too well.

Another operation followed and when Mark opened his eyes and couldn't see, he accepted this as the norm as in the past it would take a couple of weeks post op for his eyesight to come back. But weeks turned into months and still Mark couldn't see. The operation had failed. As did a further one. This was not part of the script. Mark went from being an independent aspiring sportsman with the potential of a great career to holding onto his mum's elbow, living at home and being wholly dependant. He reacted badly, as indeed most of us would, to this next setback.

"Looking back now I can see I was carrying a lot of prejudice about blind people. I didn't think they did anything – that they didn't study, they didn't graduate, they didn't work. Suddenly I was one of them." But it didn't take Mark long to deal with it. He went through the expected and usual denial, anger, bargaining, self-pity and, finally, reached acceptance. From playing the bargaining game in his head, through waking up and thinking he actually could see, Mark came out the other side and within the year was reskilling. He realised that when he examined his lot, his chances of success were above the average. He had his family and friends to support him, and a good education.

A chance connection led to a job in Dublin – and again Mark was on the road to rebuilding his life.

"Even though I was so pathetic I couldn't hold my arm up, my identity remained"

To really validate himself, he had to start racing again. Which he did. He decided to compete in a South Pole race for 43 days alongside royal marines and some big names like James Cracknell, double Olympic gold medallist. "I wasn't trying to prove anything about blindness, I was just trying to be the person I had always been."

He started building up his own business of motivational speaking which funded the things he really wanted to do. He sees this as an irony that his blindness was therefore fundamental in financing his desires.

Whilst in the Antarctic, he had a lot of time to think. Sometimes 14 to 16 hours a day. It made him review his life and reach the decision to propose to his girlfriend, Corporate and Human Rights lawyer, Simone George. As he ended the expedition he was advised that many people make life changing decisions and that it was advisable to get back to real life and digest before doing anything. Mark took this to an extreme and waited over 6 months before he asked Simone to marry him. She said yes.

A few weeks before the wedding, Mark was back in Henley when he fell out of a second storey window. Fortunately, friends found him, lying unconscious. He had massive internal injuries, bleeds on his brain and paralysis. Then followed 7 months in Stoke Mandeville, 8 in hospital in Ireland.

He could do nothing. Being blind hadn't stopped him being active, didn't leave him fearing for his life in the way this did. This had a profound effect on Mark who whilst he knew he was lucky to be alive, was left with a deep sense of sadness, almost despair. He wrote down the thoughts going through his head. There was little else he could do.

Next came waves of kidney infections, weight loss and eventually a heart infection. He could do no more than live day to day, not looking to the future. He had tried to take everything that had happened to him head on. But every time he did, he was knocked back even further. But where his personal motivation failed him, others stepped in to support. Simone was with him in the hospitals for a year. He began blogging to try and make sense of what he was feeling and started to communicate with well-wishers. This interaction helped him get back onto a different road.

As Mark lay in bed unable to move anything except his arms, he says he "felt pathetic lying there in his bed."

So, when Tony Martin spoke to him of setting up a race in Siberia, Mark realised that even though he was still an adventurer in his head, the reality was that even if he somehow participated he couldn't race, he couldn't contribute.

Whilst in hospital, Mark struggled with the idea that the 100% reality is that there is no cure for paralysis. He knew he had to accept it. But he also knew that was simply the beginning of a journey not the end. Acceptance of what is doesn't rule out the hope – and the possibility of what can be. Referencing his adventuring love again, Mark talked about how at one point it was accepted that nobody had been to the South Pole, but that didn't stop people like Scott and Shackleton hoping and attempting to get there. And ultimately succeeding. Mark decided that accepting there was no cure, yet exploring the hope to find one would be his new adventure. And now he is doing the impossible.

Mark is working with scientists from Wings For Life and the Reeve Foundation in an open and collaborative way to try and develop a cure for spinal cord injuries.

He says "I am treating my injury like a sports injury. The worry is I might not get better and if I do, it might take a long time."

A three month study in UCLA in 2014 showed that by walking in a robotic exoskeleton with electrical stimulation of the spinal cord while taking a drug to further excite the nervous system meant that Mark could achieve some voluntary leg movement. Mark firmly believes that "we can do more than we think is possible' and "if we collaborate properly, we will create a cure".

Mark has applied this thinking back into his motivational speaking to help businesses achieve more than they think is possible by thinking differently. The rebranded adventurer turned explorer is genuinely a man who finds a positive from even the worst disasters.

And that should give us all hope. CS



Around 1,000 people sustain a spinal cord injury each year in the UK and Ireland.



50,000 people live with paralysis in the UK and Ireland.



Spinal cord injury can affect anyone at any time.



The cost to the nation is estimated at £1 billion per annum.

To have Mark Pollock come and speak to you about how to achieve greater results that you thought possible visit;

www.markpollock.com

To find out more about the exploration into a cure for spinal cord injury;

www.markpollocktrust.org
www.wingsforlifeinternational.org
www.christopherreeve.org

To help in this amazing cause, why not be an adventurer yourself and participate in the World Run this year? Held simultaneously in 35 locations all over the world this race not only covers all geographies, but all time zones and all seasons. You aren't racing each other, you are racing to be the last one to be caught by the Safety Car.

www.wingsforlifeworldrun.com

To find out more about how you can support those who are suffering spinal cord injuries;

www.backuptrust.org.uk

04/04/04. That is a date Matthew King will never forget.

It was his very first academy match for the London Broncos.

But he had only been playing for a matter of seconds when a tackle left him on the ground. Surrounded by paramedics asking him if he could move, he instinctively knew that his life would never be the same again; that the tackle had broken his neck.

Matt says that the thoughts that went through his mind at that moment were not ones he would wish on his worst enemy. He spent nine months in hospital. But he was paralysed. He had no feeling whatsoever below his neck and was dependant on a ventilator.

Matt, who had been in the process of applying to the RAF prior it his injury, knew he would have to re-evaluate his entire life He went through very dark days, thinking of himself as a victim, asking "why me?". But pretty quickly he came to realise that that sort of thinking wasn't going to get him anywhere and that he had to accept what had happened. And move on.

Although it was so awful that this happened to one so young, the silver lining meant he had options. Matt, a huge sports lover like Mark, and also a good writer thought about media and sports journalism but finally settled on the law as his future profession. His weakness meant that he didn't have the strength to do four A-levels at once; this was more a test of his fatigue rather than his ability so he just did history and geography. He got straight A's.

He got a place at the University of Hertfordshire and with the help of his support workers (who are with him 24 hours a day even while he is sleeping) managed the commute from his home in Bedfordshire and graduated in 2009 with a first class honours degree.

Stewarts Law, a law firm who specialise in high value catastrophic injuries, offered Matt a placement and he did that each summer until they eventually gave him a training contract and he qualifies as a fully fledged solicitor next January. Now Matt works to help people like himself; he knows that by getting them the best compensation possible, it can have a real impact on their quality of life.

Matt knows what it is like to feel there is no hope.

When he was going through his darkest days at Stoke Mandeville he talks about how there was nobody to really give him any inspiration. Whilst the nurses and doctors encouraged him, he felt it was empty words. None of them had been where he was. He was one of the youngest patients there and, because he needed ventilation, one of the worst cases. There was nobody who understood what he was going through, nobody who had the experience to be able to help him through it. His only source of hope came from following Christopher Reeve but he died in the October that Matt was in hospital.

Matt says re members feeling "if Superman can't do it, what hope have I?". It turns out Matt was a real life superman and he did overcome his adversities and made it his quest to help others not just through his work but in ways he would have appreciated himself.

He regularly visits hospitals speaking with patients who have suffered from spinal cord injuries and giving them the hope to rebuild their lives. So great has his work been that he was awarded the OBE in 2012.



Like Mark, Matt believes that he isn't defined by his disability. He is still Matthew King. A successful 27 year old working for a City law firm, living an independent life and happily engaged. He still loves rugby and feels no bitterness towards the game about what happened to him. After his injuries, Matt took his coaching badges but he stopped after a year because it just reminded him of what he couldn't do.

"You can't protect yourself from life. If it's going to happen it will"

He says "you can't protect yourself from life. If it's going to happen it will. This could have happened to me slipping over in the shower." The massive support Matt had from his family and friends who wouldn't give up on him gave him an obligation not to give up on himself.

Like Mark, Matt is actively involved with Wings For Life and the Reeve Foundation - but also with the Back Up Trust who are more focussed on giving help now rather than looking to a cure for the future. Whilst Matt believes that it is of the utmost importance to raise funds to try and find a cure, he doesn't believe it will ever help him personally. "The human body is just not designed not to move for 10 years."

Matt has participated in the Great North Run twice and also the New York Marathon to raise money for the charities he supports and to show that his disability can't stop him. He is hoping to be on the start line of the London Marathon one day too.

Matt has written an autobiography entitled 04/04/04 and it will be published this August.

Two incredible men. Both of whom never gave up hope even when all the odds were against them. And both of whom live their lives now to give hope to others. CS

What we've been up to - and what's to come.

A diary of our Livery events.

THE COMPANY'S BANQUET

14th April 2015

The Company's Annual Banquet in the magnificent setting of the Mansion House will take place on Tuesday 14th April 2015, by kind permission of the Lord Mayor and when we will be joined by Patricia O'Brien, Ambassador of Ireland to the UN Office in Geneva, our speaker for the evening.

The Mansion House lies at the heart of the City. Designed and built by Architect and Clerk of the City's Work, George Dance the Elder, it has stood as the official residence of each Lord Mayor of the City of London, since 1758. Imposingly Palladian in style, it is noted today for its magnificent collections, including gold and silver plate, sculptures and the Harold Samuel Art Collection, said to be the finest collection of Flemish and Dutch 17th Century paintings in Britain.

Tickets and more details are available from the Clerk at mail@citysolicitors.org.uk



Gerald Sharpe Photography



©Historic Royal Palaces, photo by Richard Lea-Hair

THE COMPANY'S ANNUAL SERVICE

18th May 2015 6.30 pm

We hope that you can join us for this year's Annual Service which the Company has been privileged to hold in the Chapel Royal of St Peter-ad-Vincula in HM Tower of London for nearly 50 years. Once again, the service will be led by the Company's Honorary Chaplain, the Reverend Canon Roger Hall MBE, Chaplain to Her Majesty The Queen and the Tower of London and will feature the magnificent Choir of the Chapel Royal.

Dating from 1520, the Chapel Royal is of huge historical importance within the Tower. Three queens of England, Anne Boleyn, Catherine Howard and Jane Grey, and two saints of the Roman Catholic Church, Sir Thomas More and John Fisher, are buried here. Attending the Service provides a unique opportunity to visit after the tourist crowds have departed.

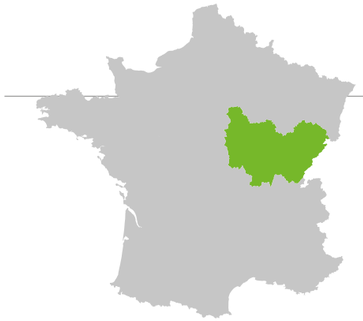
The service is followed by a reception and supper at nearby Trinity House and is open to all Liverymen and Freemen and their guests. If you have not previously attended look out for details on the Company's website www.citysolicitors.org.uk or contact the Clerk at mail@citysolicitors.org.uk

Date for your diary

15th June 2015 5.30pm

The City of London Solicitors' Company AGM &
City of London Law Society AGM & Champagne Party.

All Liverymen & Freemen are invited to attend at
Tallow Chandlers' Hall, Dowgate Hill, London EC4



THE MASTER'S BURGUNDY WEEKEND

Travel by luxury coach from Central London to Beaune in Burgundy for a packed itinerary of visits and tastings, covering producers such as Domaine Roger Belland, Domaine Vincent Bachelet, Domain Coste-Caumartin and Domaine Camus Pere. The return journey will also take in Reims, for Champagne purchases on the way home.

23 – 26 April 2015

£1,370 (includes travel, accommodation and breakfast, lunches, dinners, all visits, briefings and tastings as well as Champagne during the tour)

Single supplement is £150.

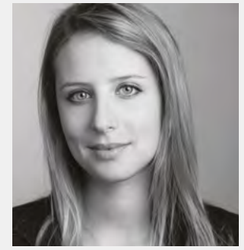
For more information and a booking form, visit the Company's website www.citysolicitors.org.uk



Vincent Bachelet of Chassagne Montrachet

Wig & Pen Prize 2014

This year's Wig & Pen Prize for pro bono work has recognised the outstanding achievements of Rebecca Perlman, a newly qualified solicitor at Herbert Smith Freehills LLP.



The Prize, which is awarded annually by the City of London Law Society, comprises the silver Wig & Pen inkstand and £750 for the winner's charity. It is awarded to a City solicitor, up to five years qualified, who the judges feel has made a significant contribution to the quality of justice and in helping to ensure that the legal system is open and available to all.

Rebecca's commitment to pro bono work began during her training contract, where she dedicated many hours advising on employment, housing and debt issues at Herbert Smith Freehill's free legal advice clinic. But her outstanding contribution has been to HSF's flagship international pro bono initiative, "Fair Deal Sierra Leone" a free legal assistance facility created to redress the balance on deals between the Government of Sierra Leone and international investors. Rebecca joined the Fair Deal Steering Group in 2012 as a first seat trainee and persevered in creating opportunities for junior lawyers at the firm to participate in HSF's pro bono secondment to the Government of Sierra Leone. Spending her qualification leave in Freetown, she demonstrated that junior lawyers could also make a valuable contribution. Working at the heart of Government in the Public Private Partnership Unit of the President's Office, Rebecca focused on private sector investment in Sierra Leone's energy sector. Despite having limited experience in this area of law, Rebecca utilised the firm's resources to draft template power purchase agreements for the Government to use during negotiations with investors and to provide guidance on the key issues the Government should consider when entering into energy-related PPPs. She also drafted sections of the PPP Act 2014 to bolster the Act's anti-corruption and anti-fraud provisions.

After qualifying into the Corporate Division, Rebecca has since moved to HSF's corporate responsibility team where she manages pro bono work for the firm's UK and international offices. She also plays a central role in liaison with the international development community to promote UK legal expertise to provide greater access to justice for developing countries.

More recently Rebecca has remained at the centre of the HSF's assistance for the Government of Sierra Leone in dealing with the Ebola crisis. She has also focussed the firm's fundraising efforts to support the medical response and donated her Wig & Pen Prize money to the Disasters Emergency Committee Ebola Appeal.

Presenting the award, Vincent Keaveny, Master of the City of London Solicitors' Company said,

> "Rebecca has been instrumental in taking HSF's, Fair Deal Sierra Leone and helping the government of Sierra Leone with its international commercial transactions, and internal governance and rule of law to a new level. In many ways, this sort of work is where the best value-added can come from City firms – doing work of a nature that others don't have the reach, resources and expertise to do."

Herbert Smith Freehills' former Senior Partner, Jonathan Scott, said "Rebecca is a trailblazer for young lawyers who wish to engage with the international development community about how law firms and NGOs can work together to assist governments in developing countries and make a difference." CS

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EX-PARTE

PRIVILEGE CLUB

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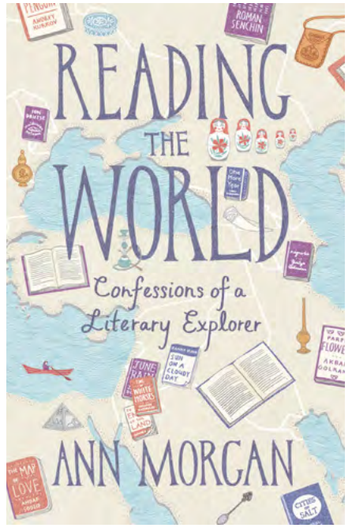
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Offer ends 30 June 2015.

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HOPE AND THE ROPE

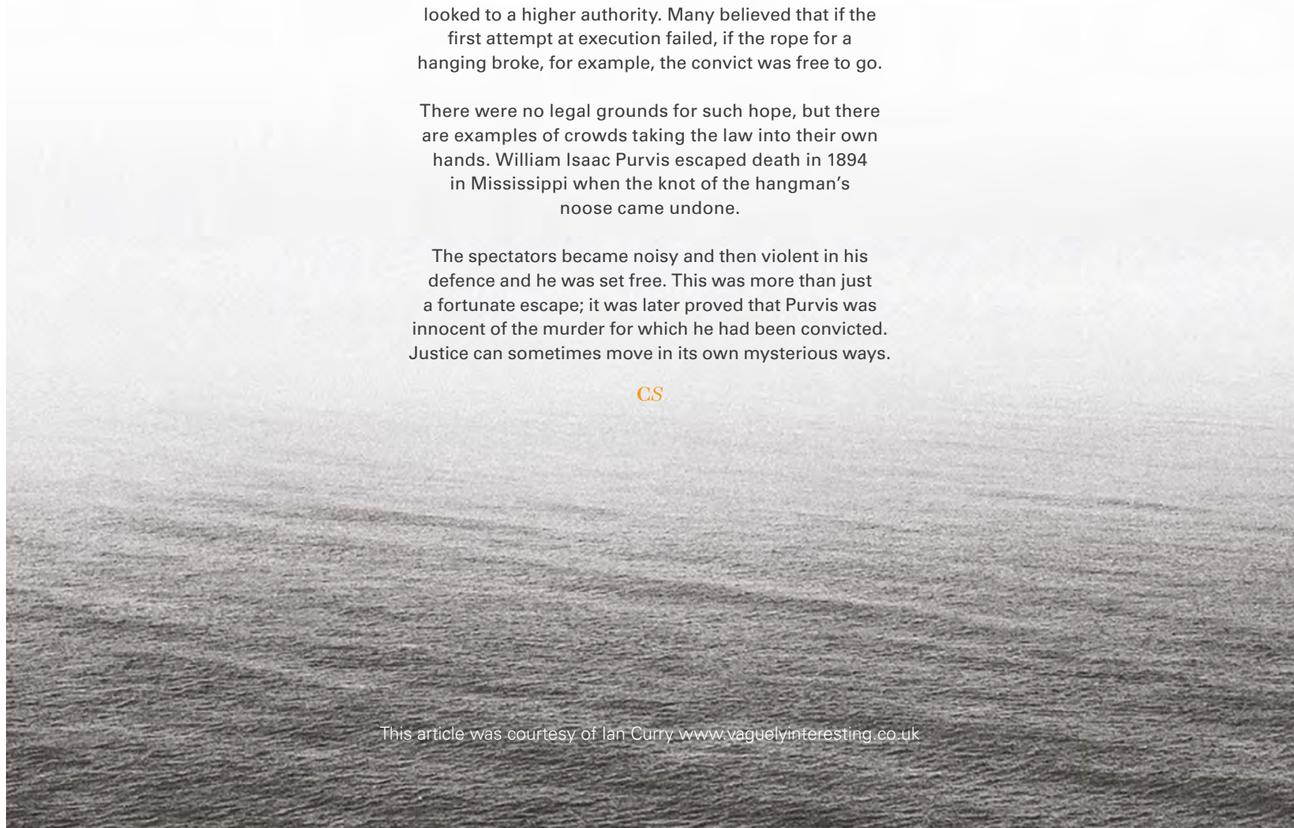
Hope may not be the first word that springs to mind for condemned prisoners being taken to their place of execution. But even in this bleakest moment, many hope for a last minute reprieve.

Today, this comes in the form of a telephone call from an elected official, but in previous centuries criminals looked to a higher authority. Many believed that if the first attempt at execution failed, if the rope for a hanging broke, for example, the convict was free to go.

There were no legal grounds for such hope, but there are examples of crowds taking the law into their own hands. William Isaac Purvis escaped death in 1894 in Mississippi when the knot of the hangman's noose came undone.

The spectators became noisy and then violent in his defence and he was set free. This was more than just a fortunate escape; it was later proved that Purvis was innocent of the murder for which he had been convicted. Justice can sometimes move in its own mysterious ways.

CS



This article was courtesy of Ian Curry www.vaguelyinteresting.co.uk

