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Quarterly Civil Team Newsletter

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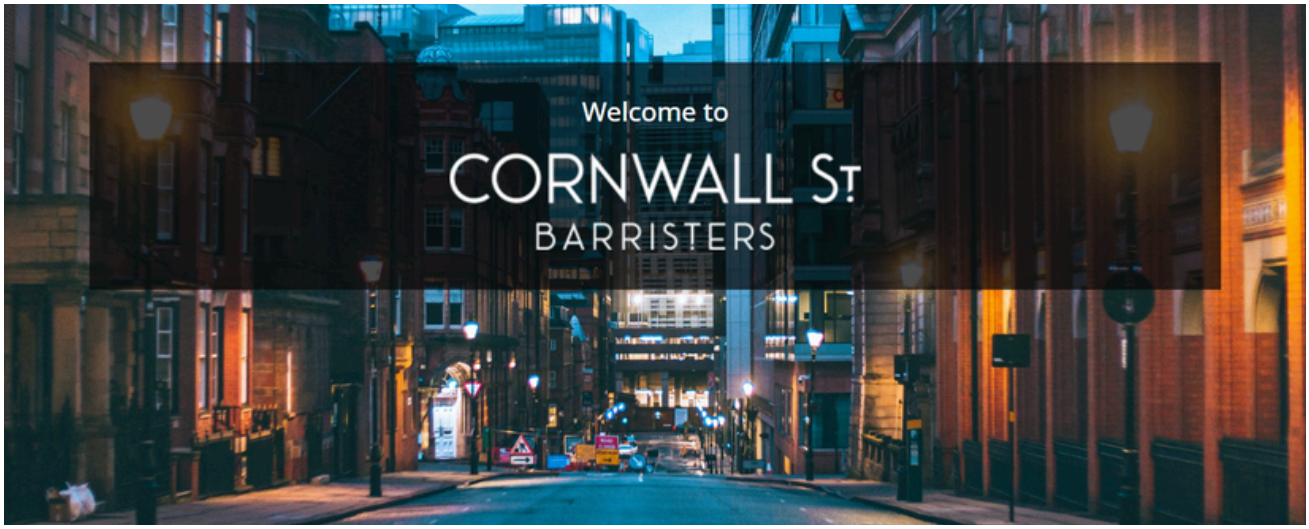

Welcome from Cornwall Street Civil Team

Welcome to this second edition of the Cornwall Street Barristers Civil Team Newsletter.

Thank you to our contributors, and to those who have read and hopefully enjoy our newsletter. I trust you will find this edition informative and insightful as to the range of work undertaken, areas researched by the Civil Team, and what it means to be a Pupil Barrister at Cornwall Street.

We hope to produce further editions of this newsletter every quarter and our aim is to become a leading source of analysis and discussion about a wide range of developments across the entire spectrum of civil litigation.

If you find this newsletter interesting, informative, useful or all three then please do forward it on to colleagues and others who may also like to read it. Finally, if you have been involved in or become aware of any legal development that you would like the team to cover in an upcoming edition then please do not hesitate to email us at civil@cornwallstreet.co.uk.

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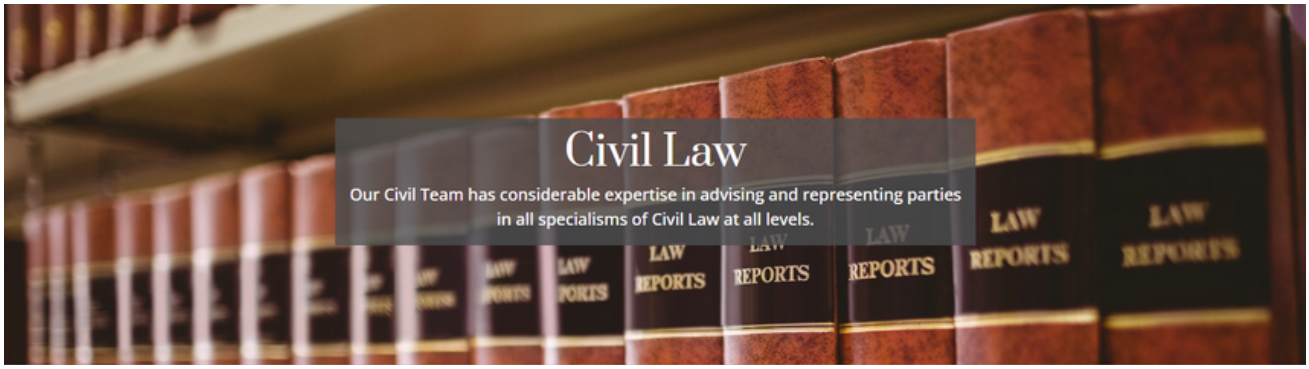
Editors:
Esther Sheppard and
Imogen Smalley



Introduction

This edition provides a compilation of varied reading, from having capacity to make a will, to recent food development and the difference between PBOs and GMOs.

The experiences of pupil Susan Guest is explored and this edition's 'Spotlight on' focusses on civil and family tenant Natalie Croll (2021 call).

The following topics appear in this quarter's edition.

- **Michael Trevelyan** and **Raheel Ahmed** compare the cases of Nathadwarawala v. General Medical Council and General Medical Council v. Konathala and discuss one of their own recent cases.

- **Timothy Jacques** explores four cases concerned with challenging the validity of a will on the grounds of lack of testamentary capacity.

- **Imogen Smalley** discusses the recent legal developments of Precision Bred Organisms within the food industry, the impact on consumers and potential legal consequences.

- **Esther Sheppard** interviews pupil **Susan Guest** as she successfully juggles being a mum of four with a demanding pupillage.

- **Natalie Croll** shares her journey to the bar, the challenges of her civil practice and inspirations in our regular spot light on feature.

I hope that you enjoy this edition of the Civil Team Newsletter, and take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2026.

Have you heard our Civil Law Podcast?

Michael Trevelyan explores all things civil law in his podcast. The episodes are under 30 minutes and provide bitesize insights into topics such as: compensation to secondary victims and crypto currency.

You can listen to the podcast on Amazon music here.

Is an unsigned appeal form brought in time?
Michael Trevelyan & Raheel Ahmed

Raheel Ahmed recently undertook a reduced pupillage in Chambers under the supervision of Michael Trevelyan. Raheel is a practising lawyer in Pakistan with a keen interest in law reform. In this article Raheel and Michael discuss a recent case in which they were both involved; the case concerned a civil penalty of £20,000.00 imposed following the alleged illegal employment of workers with no valid immigration status by a takeaway business contrary to section 15 of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 ("the Act").

After the penalty was imposed by the Home Office, the business exercised its right to appeal to the County Court. Section 17(4B) of the Act imposes a strict time limit of 28 days to file the appeal on Form N161 and, in this case, that time limit expired on 2nd June 2023. Form N161 was filed on 30th May 2023, in time, but on 16th June 2023 the Appellant's Solicitors received an e-mail from the Court clerk stating that the signature required in Box 14 was missing. The e-mail required an amended Form N161 to be filed by 23rd June 2023. In fact, the amended form was filed later that same day.

The case came before H.H.J. Wall in the County Court in Birmingham on the papers on 10th March 2025, after directions had been given to progress the appeal, and was dismissed for being brought out of time.

The Appellant's Solicitors applied to set aside this order on the basis that the appeal had been brought on 30th May 2023. The seemingly straightforward question for H.H.J. Truman hearing that application was whether the filing of an incomplete Form N161 on 30th May 2023 was sufficient to constitute bringing the appeal in time because, if not, the amended appeal document was filed out of time.

It was common ground between the parties that the issue was a jurisdictional one and so if the appeal was not brought in time the usual CPR powers to extend time or grant relief from sanctions could not apply, not least because of the explicit prohibition contained in paragraph 3.5 of PD52D. The Respondent relied upon the High Court's decision in Nathadwarawala v. General Medical Council [2025] EWHC 459 (Admin) in which an unsigned Form N161 was held not to constitute a valid appeal. The Appellant relied upon the even more recent High Court decision of General Medical Council v. Konathala [2025] EWHC 1550 (Admin) in which the Court found that it had jurisdiction to apply CPR r. 3.10 to remedy the omission to sign Box 14 of Form N161 and the appeal was brought in time. It fell to H.H.J. Truman to decide which case to apply to this appeal and in this article Raheel discusses Nathadwarawala while Michael deals with Konathala.

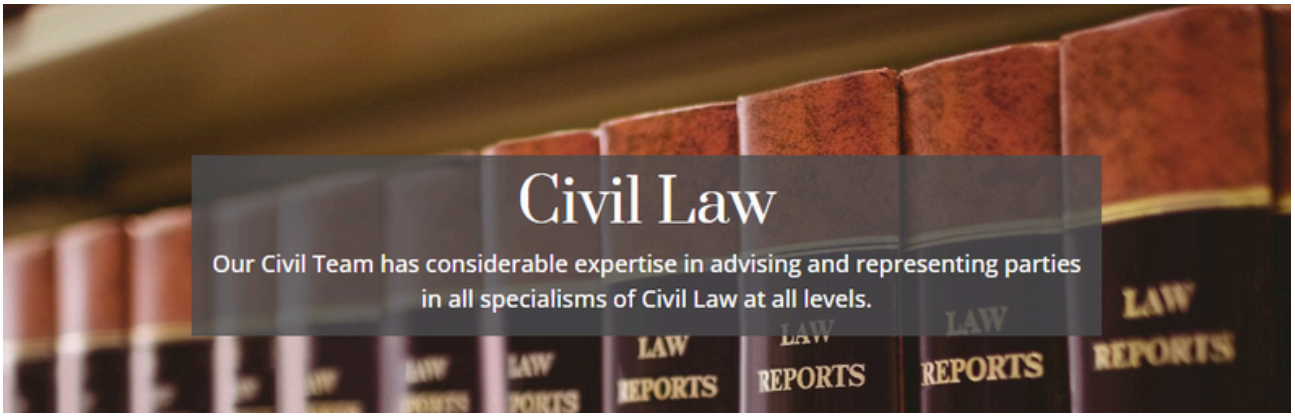
Nathadwarawala v. General Medical Council

In Nathadwarawala, an appeal was filed by the Appellant, a medical practitioner, against the sanction of suspension on the ground of misconduct imposed by the General Medical Council ("Respondent"). The Appellant contended that the suspension was, in all circumstances, excessive. The Respondent raised a jurisdictional objection to the appeal, arguing that the appeal had not been filed within the statutory 28-day period.

Although the Appellant had filed Appellant Notice Form N161 within the 28-day period and paid relevant court fee. However, the same was returned by the Court staff on the ground that the form was not signed by the Appellant. By the time the omission was identified by the Court staff, the 28-day appeal period had already elapsed, and the amended form subsequently submitted by the Appellant was already out of time.

In response to the question of whether the filing of Appellant Notice Form within 28-day period constituted a valid appeal notwithstanding that the form was not signed; the Court decided that unsigned Appellant Notice of Appeal within 28-day period did not constitute the bringing of a valid appeal. The Court, in its reasoning, stated that "In principle, an appeal to a court is constituted only if it has been brought in accordance with the relevant procedure set out in the relevant rules." Whilst the Guidance Notes of Form N161 do not expressly state that the form must be signed; however, the Court did not consider this as a relevant point because the N161 Form itself expressly stated (in section 14) that the notice of appeal must be signed.

The Court further noted that the omission of a signature is itself a significant omission vitiating the validity of an otherwise valid appeal. The Court reasoning was that the affixing of signature indicates that: form is complete and is no longer a working draft; and confirms the information provided therein.



On the question whether the Court can retrospectively validate an Appeal Form pursuant to CPR r.3.10; the Court decided in the negative on the following basis: CPR r.3.10 is concerned with circumstances where "proceedings have already been started". Whereas, in view of the Court, the proceedings in this case were not initiated as the Appellant Notice was not sealed.

General Medical Council v. Konathala

Konathala had the benefit of being heard on 13th March 2025, approximately two weeks after the decision in Nathadwarawala was published. In Konathala the Appellant's papers were sealed despite the omission of a signature in Box 14 and the Judge found that this seal was to be treated as indicative of the appeal being issued and the commencement of the proceedings. There was some doubt as to whether the papers should have been sealed by the Court staff but, as the fact was that they had been, this was sufficient to confer jurisdiction to deal with the case.

Michael argued before H.H.J. Truman that the principle of Konathala should apply to the application. This was because although the Court had not sealed Form N161 in time it had, via its clerk, informed the Appellant that if the completed form was not filed by 23rd June 2023 it "will then be out of time" and, furthermore, on 22nd June 2023 the Court sent a standard form letter with directions confirming that Form N161 "was filed on 30th May 2023", a reference to the original document and not the later, complete, version.

Michael submitted that, as there is no requirement in the CPR for Form N161 to be sealed, an analogy could be drawn with CPR PD7A paragraph 6.1 which states that claims are "brought" for the purposes of limitation on either the date of issue or, if earlier, the date of receipt at the Court office. Michael further submitted that the use of the word "brought" in the Act rather than "issued" was significant and intended to indicate that the date of receipt of the form was relevant rather than the date on which it was sealed or an amended version filed.

Ultimately H.H.J. Truman found that Nathadwarawala was the applicable case and the appeal was, therefore, out of time. The Judge stated that the Court had "a great deal of sympathy" for the Appellant in what was "an unfortunate case" but neither the Court's e-mail nor its subsequent letter could be treated as the equivalent of sealing the papers, which was found to be the sole basis upon which the Court in Konathala felt able to exercise its jurisdiction over the appeal. The application to set aside H.H.J. Wall's order was, therefore, dismissed.

This case demonstrates both the procedural complexity and severe consequences for error that can arise in statutory appeals. If you would like to instruct Michael to advise or act in a case involving a statutory appeal do not hesitate to contact his Clerks in Chambers.

Challenging the validity of a will on the grounds of lack of testamentary capacity is not a task to be undertaken lightly, as demonstrated by four cases all determined since the beginning of October. In several of these decisions the validity of the Will was also challenged on other grounds, which are not addressed in this article.

***Jenkins and Vooght v Evans* [2025] EWHC 2438 (Ch) – HHJ Russen KC – 3 October 2025**

The testator was 90 years old when he executed the disputed Will. Three months before execution he had undertaken a cognitive impairment test and scored within the normal range. The Will was professionally drafted by a solicitor and witnessed by him and his legal secretary. The 'golden rule' was not observed – i.e. no evidence was obtained from a medical professional as to the testator's capacity at the time of execution. No expert evidence was adduced by either party. The Will was determined to be valid.

***Maile v Maile and others* [2025] EWHC 2494 (Ch) – Green J. – 6 October 2025**

The testatrix was 92 years old when she executed the first disputed codicil and 94 years old when she executed the second. The will was professionally drafted, and the court described the will-writer's attendance notes as being 'the crucial documents'. The golden rule was not observed. The parties each adduced expert evidence and the shared expert opinion was that the testatrix was suffering from mild memory problems and some variability of her recall at the material times, but that she retained testamentary capacity. The codicils were determined to be valid.

***Scott v Scott and Simister* [2025] EWHC 2796 (Ch) – Richards J. – 29 October 2025**

The testator was 80 years old when he executed the two disputed Wills. The wills were professionally drafted, albeit the will-writer was not a qualified solicitor. The court considered her attendance notes and observed that they recorded that she 'knew what she was looking for in terms of testamentary capacity.' The golden rule was not observed. The parties each adduced expert evidence. The experts agreed that the testator was suffering from both frontotemporal dementia and progressive non-fluent aphasia at the material times, but disagreed as to whether he had testamentary capacity. In the years before the Wills were executed the testator had on occasions exhibited erratic and aggressive behaviour, and his driving licence had been revoked. Medical records made around the time of execution recorded that the testator displayed communication problems that extended beyond the realm of expressive language, and that he had difficulties in comprehension. Court of Protection proceedings had been instigated during the deceased's lifetime and a capacity assessment was undertaken in connection with those proceedings between the dates of execution of the two disputed wills. That assessment concluded that the testator had capacity for the purposes of the Mental Capacity Act. The Wills were determined to be valid.

***Bowerman v Bowerman* [2025] EWHC 2947 (Ch) – Master Clark – 18 November 2025**

The testator was 72 years of age when he executed the disputed will. Five years earlier he had suffered a debilitating stroke which significantly affected his ability to communicate. The Wills were professionally drafted, although the instruction was arranged by one of the beneficiaries, who also completed the Will Information Form. The night before execution the testator had been very ill and had managed little sleep. An employee of the solicitor's firm met him during the course of the morning and recorded that he understood the draft Will, but the court observed that there had been no structured assessment of his capacity. The testator's GP then visited the testator and arranged for him to be admitted to hospital as a medical emergency due to hear failure. The solicitor visited the testator between the GP's visit and the arrival of the ambulance and the Will was executed. His solicitor's attendance note recorded that the testator had read the will carefully and confirmed it was what he wanted. However, the court found that his attendance note was coloured by information which had been provided by the beneficiary on the Will Information Form, and that it was not satisfied that he took sufficient steps to find out whether the testator had capacity. After the will was executed, the GP provided a letter in which he certified that the testator had full testamentary capacity. However in his oral evidence he explained that this letter was intended to describe the testator's baseline condition, and that he would not have had capacity during an episode of heart failure, which he was experiencing on the day the will was executed. The court determined that neither solicitor undertook a formal assessment of the testator's capacity, and the best evidence was that of the GP.

It found that the testator did not have testamentary capacity, but that the claimant's challenge to the validity of the will was barred by his lengthy delay in commencing proceedings.

Comment

None of the decisions is surprising, but three clear themes emerge. Firstly, challenging a will on capacity grounds is a formidable task, and vague allegations of impaired memory or infirmity will not suffice. As HHJ Matthews recently observed in Burgess v Whittle [2025] EWHC 2633 (Ch) the policy of the law is to enable persons who may be elderly, of modest or even limited intelligence, and even suffering from illness, and taking medication, to make wills. Secondly, a failure to follow the 'golden rule' will not in itself be enough. Thirdly, the contemporaneous notes of the will-writer will always be evidence of central, and often decisive, importance. If those notes are thorough and indicate that the will-writer gave appropriate consideration to the issue of capacity during the meeting, a challenge to that conclusion will be a strenuous uphill struggle.

Tim accepts instructions in contested probate proceedings and claims under the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act 1975.

Food products containing Precision Bred Organisms (PBOs) are likely to be available for consumption in England, Scotland and Wales imminently. Cell Cultivated Products (CCPs) – aka lab-grown foods – are currently set to become available across England, Scotland and Wales within two years.

This article explores the steps made during 2025 towards making England a soon-to-be global leader in offering novel foods to consumers.

Precision bred organisms (PBOs)

Critics argue that PBOs are no different to genetically modified organisms (GMOs). This is not strictly true. Both involve the editing of an organism's DNA in a laboratory to produce an organism that has desirable features (e.g. the ability to survive weedkiller). Modern-day genetic modification involves the crossbreeding of species that could not happen naturally. On the other hand, precision breeding involves the editing of DNA in a way that can happen through traditional plant or animal breeding methods.

Some GMOs have come about through traditional breeding methods. Supermarket corn-on-the-cob was developed through natural farming methods to finally produce the version the UK (and much of the globe) knows today. But developments in the transferability of DNA in laboratories during the 1970s resulted in modern-day genetic engineering.

Genetic engineering is the process through which scientists either a) select the preferred genes of one organism from a DNA chain and insert it into the DNA chain of another, or b) remove part of the DNA that prevents the organism from forming in the desired way. Today, in the jurisdiction of England and Wales, plants that contain transgenes (genes from another organism) that could not have been achieved through traditional breeding are regulated as GMOs.

The regulations that came into force during 2025 mean that PBOs are likely to be available imminently for purchase in England.

Cell cultivated products (CCPs)

CCPs are the second type of novel food being explored by the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the regulator of food safety across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. CCPs are lab-grown foods. Cells are taken from either the living organism or products (such as meat or eggs). The cells are grown in a controlled environment before they are harvested and amended to produce the final product. CCPs are not yet available on the shelves within the UK. On 05 December 2025, the FSA published their first safety guidance on CCPS.

Legal developments over 2025

The Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act 2023 (hereafter the 'Genetic Technology Act') provides for the regulation of PBOs in England. However, parts of this Act could not come into force without a supporting regulatory framework. Accordingly, the following two regulations came into force in April and May 2025.

1) Food and Feed (Regulated Products) (Amendment, Revocation, Consequential and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2025.

2) Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Regulations 2025.

Notably the regulatory framework is only in force across England. However, products containing PBOs can be sold in Scotland and Wales, owing to the United Kingdom Internal Market Act 2020 (UKIMA). In contrast, the processing of such goods in Wales and Scotland is not enabled through the UKIMA. Accordingly, the processing of PBO-products is currently governed in Scotland and Wales by different regulations that apply to GMOs.

PBOs distinguished from GMOs

The 2025 regulations distinguish GMOs from PBOs, most notably by the insertion of Section 106A into the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA). This Section essentially prevents PBOs from being tarred with the same brush as GMOs. The criminal offences that arise from the mishandling of GMOs (created by Section 118 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990) do not apply to the handling of PBOs.

The PBOs regulations also provide Ministers with the power to determine how PBOs are to be regulated.

Education programmes and additional support for businesses

Indeed, the 2025 regulations are just one way in which the previous government under Rishi Sunak aimed to speed-up the approval of novel foods before they hit the shelves. In addition to the regulations, the FSA announced four new programmes throughout 2025. These programmes aim to a) educate regulators about PBOs and CCPs, b) increase the speed with which decisions about the safety of products are made, and c) encourage companies to make applications for the use of their PBOs and/or product.

The following two programmes are aimed at supporting the release of CCPs. Firstly, March 2025 saw the launch of the FSA's 'Sandbox Programme'. This Programme is a two-year collaboration with scientists, academics, regulators and trade organisations. The goal is to ensure CCPs are safe for consumers. Secondly, in June 2025, a Business Support Service was introduced in partnership with Foods Standards Scotland (FSS). The Service aims to assist companies with applications for their CCPs to enter the market. The Service also offers a channel for businesses to communicate directly with regulators, so as to seek guidance during the application process. The aim is to help businesses submit higher-quality applications, thereby increasing the likelihood that novel foods will receive approval for marketing and sale.

In relation to PBOs, the following two schemes have been announced by the FSA. Firstly, in March 2025, an allocation of £1.4 million was announced, to establish a new innovation hub. The hub should improve regulators' expertise about emerging food technologies, with a particular emphasis on precision fermentation. The intention is to position regulators at the forefront of both understanding and overseeing these novel processes.

Secondly, the 'Market Authorisation Innovation Research Programme' (IRP) was announced in September 2025. The IRP is a rapid, one year initiative that is also designed to enhance regulators' expertise in overseeing innovative food technologies. The Programme has a particular focus on precision fermentation. Essentially, the IRP appears to be dedicated to ensuring that regulatory processes are sufficiently robust to enable the UK to fully capitalise on the opportunities presented by technological advances in food production.

Why the developments

It appears that, for many years, the general consensus amongst novel food scientists and companies has been that the UK's regulatory framework for GMO-products was excessively rigid. This reputation was largely attributable to the inheritance of EU law through the 'common understanding' between the UK and the EU. Consequently, both the FSA and FSS faced difficulties in performing their regulatory duties in a way that supported the innovative advancement of new food products. The legal situation posed the risk of stifling innovation.

At the time the 2025 regulations came into force, food products derived from PBOs were unavailable for purchase in the UK. No CCPs are currently available for purchase. Modern-day GMO-derived foods in the UK have been sold since 1996 but are clearly labelled.

Impact on consumers

Products containing PBOs will still be required to pass a safety assessment by the FSA and FSS. Theoretically, therefore, such products are unlikely to impact on consumers' health. In fact, PBO-products could be designed to have higher nutritional value. It is widely known that vegetables do not contain the level of nutrients they once did, largely because of a world-wide depletion in soil quality. Through PBOs, scientists and farmers could increase the nutritional value of vegetables. If more nutritionally dense foods become available and widely consumed, health benefits may well be seen over the coming years.

Once CCPs become available – predicted to be within two years – there is likely to be a shift in consumers' dietary preferences. Many individuals choose veganism because of environment protection and animal rights. For these individuals, lab-grown meat may provide an avenue through which meat and other animal products can once again be consumed.

Importantly, these developments could boost the economy. If England becomes one of the first jurisdictions in which companies can sell their PBO-products, the country should see a boom in imports by said companies. This may strengthen the economy, as said companies will be required to pay import tax. Further, shop owners offering novel food items could benefit financially.

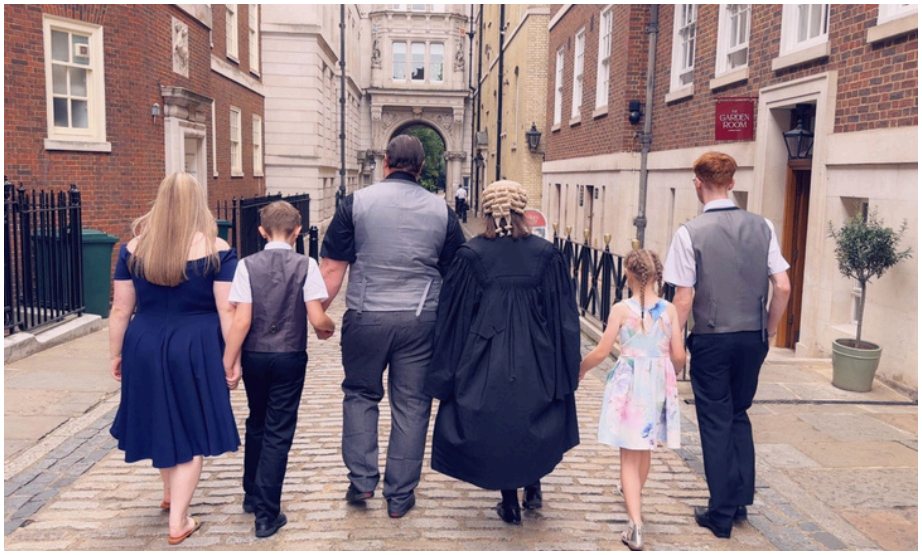
Potential legal consequences on the horizon

England's food safety laws were adopted from EU law as part of the common understanding when the UK exited the EU. Accordingly, it is yet to be seen whether the EU feels the jurisdiction has strayed from the common understanding, owing to the distinction between GMOs and PBOs.

Imogen accepts instructions in a range of civil matters including TOLATA, contract, personal injury and road traffic matters. Imogen also accepts criminal work.

Pupil interview: Susan Guest

by Esther Sheppard



Susan is a 39 year old mum of four, who began a pupillage with Cornwall Street barristers on 6 October 2025. Cornwall Street offers a Common Law pupillage, and Susan has already spent a month with the family team and a month with the civil team and is halfway through a month of crime.

Susan is dedicated and ambitious and seeking to push her achievements even further has enrolled to begin her masters' degree in law in October 2026.

Michael Trevelyan, one of Susan's supervisors had this to say *"I have been supervising Sue during part of her first six. She is capable, conscientious and diligent. I am looking forward to supervising her again during part of her second six and I am sure that she has a great career at the bar ahead of her"*

I caught up with Susan to find out about her route to the bar, how she has found her time with Cornwall Street Barristers Civil team, how she juggles her busy family life with such a demanding role, and her future ambitions.

Susan, tell me a bit about your background and route to the bar and to Cornwall Street Barristers.
I was with the CPS for three years as a paralegal. The role involved seeing cases through from pre-charge to conclusion. I would review the evidence, build the bundles, make special measures applications, prepare bad character review applications case preparation, and attend court with Counsel to ensure they had everything they needed.
I followed a traditional route to the bar, studying the LLB at Stafford University from 2019-2022. And then studying for the bar course under a CPS sponsorship, part time while working full time for the CPS.

I gained a Jules Thorn scholarship from Middle Temple and a Blackstones entrance award.

Pupil interview: Susan Guest

by Esther Sheppard

What were the ages of your children while you were studying?

My youngest child was two, when I started the LLB. The others were 5, 10, and 12.

That must have been incredibly busy and challenging, how did you manage?

“A lot of caffeine and crying, with scheduled break downs” says Sue, laughing. “I remember doing my criminal exam during covid with my youngest child under the table screaming and whacking me on the legs, but I managed to get 90%.
My husband was pivotal in getting me through, he picked up the slack while I was concentrating on studying. It was hard, but it was absolutely worth it. At the start my family thought I was crackers but now are insanely proud.”

What kept you going?
I never wanted the kids not to see me succeed, I wanted them to think, If Mum can do it in those circumstances, I can take on the world, although my youngest child couldn’t grasp what I was doing and went to school telling everybody I went to school to be an embarrassment!

How did it feel when you were told you had pupillage
I applied for pupillage every year for three years, finally got it in the third year.
I felt like Rebecca (Rebecca Keeves, head of pupillage) had phoned the wrong person and I cried for about half an hour.
I received the email before the call and I couldn’t read it, my husband was saying “you’ve got the offer” and I said “No I haven’t”

What did you do to celebrate?
That night we made plans whether celebrating or drowning our sorrows, we went to 58th Street in London, a 1920 jazz bar where everyone is in character, as if it’s in New York. There is a live jazz band and a singing hostess, it was amazing, we stayed over and drank too much.

How are you finding juggling pupillage with family life?
I always knew pupillage would be demanding, and as a family we prepared for that together. We arranged for the younger children to attend before and after school clubs so I could travel to and from court, while the older children helped at home to give me time to read my case papers and prepare notes. My husband’s flexible role has been invaluable, allowing him to adapt to the rhythm of my new responsibilities. Despite the intensity of pupillage, we prioritise keeping family routines as normal as possible. Shared cooking and mealtimes remain a focal point of our day, giving us time to chat about our day and complete homework. Weekends are protected for family days out or simple pleasures like board games, ensuring quality time together. This balance I hope will continue into tenancy and as I begin my masters’ studies in October 2026.

How have you found your time at Cornwall Street so far?
It's everything I've wanted it to be and more. I have been made to feel very welcome and didn't feel new from day one. I feel like I've always been there, and no-one has made me feel like a pupil.
I have been involved in everything from spending time with the clerks to being included in various events that were going on. it was everything I wanted. I feel like I've found my people. This felt right immediately.

Tell me about your time within the Civil Team
I have shadowed Michael Trevelyan in the immigration tribunal and Jon Davis in winding up cases. I have also seen 3 or 4 small claims and a couple of fast tracks trial which have been RTA liability and quantum cases.
I have also attended some conferences for Personal Injury claims, for discussions on whether to accept settlement offers, and undertaking some drafting work, in which I receive feedback and can see the progress I'm making every time.
Observing civil claims has been a real eye opener as it is not something I've had the chance to explore. I was quite surprised with the small claims, how fast they are and how they are completed in half a day, compared to criminal court where everything takes weeks.
I found every element of it interesting and having come out of the bar course with the last thing I did being civil litigation, this time observing has brought it to life and I was able to see how it all applied in real cases.
I do not know yet whether I want to specialise in any particular area and am very interested in family and obviously have links to crime but have certainly had my head turned by civil and would like to develop a strong paper and advocacy practise.

Your future - where do you see yourself in 5 years' time
Still with Cornwall Street in a well-established practice. I would like to have a strong written civil practice as I enjoy the drafting, with advocacy as well, maybe after enough experience becoming a DDJ, who knows.

If you could go back in time, to when you were studying, what would you say to younger Susan?
I would say have a little bit more belief in yourself, as difficult as it is you will get there in the end, and you'll get there when the time is right.

SPOTLIGHT ON: Natalie Croll

Year of Call: 2021

1. For how long have you been practicing with Cornwall Street Barristers?

I joined Cornwall Street as a pupil in October 2023 and became a tenant in October 2024.

2. What are your practice areas?

I currently practice civil and family (private law children).

3. Briefly, can you describe your route to the bar?

I completed my law degree at the University of Kent and a masters' degree in Medical Law and Ethics. I later secured a role as a paralegal working within an independent inquiry and then completed the BPTC at the University of Law. I gained some experience as paralegal within a serious injuries team and worked as a County Court Advocate before joining Cornwall Street Barristers.

4.What are your future ambitions?

My future career ambition is to widen my civil practice and I am keen to undertake regulatory and inquest work.

5.What do you find the biggest challenge and biggest reward of being a barrister?

The biggest challenge as a barrister, especially as a baby barrister is regularly learning new areas of law. However, this is one of the reasons I became a barrister, as I enjoy learning and so feel a real sense of achievement once I have finished a piece of work, as I know that it is further experience under my belt!

6.What inspired you to turn to law as a career?

Throughout secondary school I had always been interested in the law but after joining a debating class, my interest in advocacy particularly grew and from then on, I was determined to pursue a career at the Bar.

7.What is a cause/charity you admire?

Macmillan Cancer Support truly supported my Grandmother when she suffered with cancer and so after my master's degree, I volunteered for them once a week for a few months, where I met some truly inspirational people.

8.What is your favourite cuisine/meal?

Caribbean food is my favourite by far as my family is from Jamaica and so it is food I've loved from a young age.

9.What is your favourite book/film?

My favourite book is actually a play called 'An Inspector Calls' by J.B.Priestley. My favourite film is Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire and I do enjoy a Harry Potter marathon over the Christmas Break!

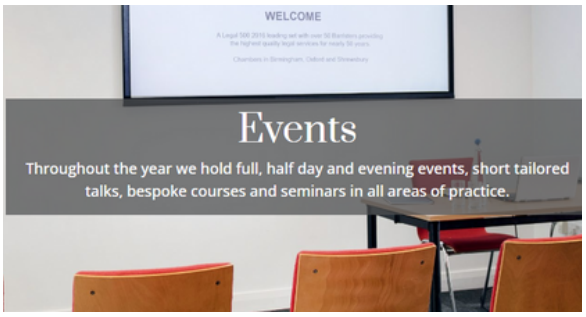
10.Where is your favourite place to stay or visit?

I recently visited Iceland and it was amazing to see the Northern Lights, as well as taking in the stunning views at the Gullfoss Waterfall and having a dip in the Blue Lagoon.

Chambers has welcomed four pupils from October 2025. Susan Guest, Elizabeth Sawyer, Sharanjeet Sidhu and Georgina Kuponiyi are all in their first six months of a common law pupillage. Sue and Liz have each completed a month with the civil team. Georgina is with the team presently and we look forward to welcoming Sharan in the new year.

Tim Jacques recently successfully applied to strike out a claim under the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act 1975 on the grounds that the Claimant had failed to progress her claim for over two years post-issue."

Imogen Smalley successfully reduced a commercial tenant's apportionment of service charges under a commercial lease on the basis that the apportionments were unreasonable.



Seminars

Watch this space for future events

Social events

The Civil Team Christmas meal was held in Birmingham and Chambers Christmas get togethers for members, pupils, staff and associates took place in Chambers at Waterloo Street, Birmingham; St Aldate's in Oxford and at La Taberna in Maidstone. An enjoyable time was had by all.

Watch this space for events in the new year.

Contributors

Michael Trevelyan

Michael accepts instructions in a range of civil matters with a particular emphasis on property disputes and contract issues, including business to business and business to consumer.

Tim Jacques

Tim accepts instructions in a range of property matters, including boundary disputes and claims for adverse possession of both registered and unregistered land.

Imogen Smalley

Imogen accepts instructions in a range of civil matters including TOLATA, contract, personal injury and road traffic matters. Imogen also accepts criminal work.

Pupillage News

Raheel Ahmed has completed his pupillage and returned to his practice in Pakistan, while maintaining links with Cornwall Street as a door tenant.

Editors

Imogen Smalley

Imogen is a tenant who practises out of Cornwall Street's Maidstone branch. She accepts instructions in all areas across the Southeast (including London and Essex).

She is a member of the Association of Regulatory and Disciplinary Lawyers, and the Planning and Environmental Bar Association.

Esther Sheppard

Esther has been a tenant of Cornwall Street Barristers for three years and accepts instructions in a range of civil matters including housing, personal injury and TOLATA cases.

Civil law contacts

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