

31 October 2005

- Pressure is likely to increase on the **Scottish Fingerprint Service** over the next few weeks to explain what is being done to reconcile the differences within its ranks as to what constitutes fingerprint identification. What is patently clear is that while this division continues all identifications coming from the service must be suspect and open to review by independent sources outwith Scotland. It is surprising that the **Lord Advocate** and **Crown Office** despite being aware of the controversy and its dangers appear to be unable or unwilling to act.

This dithering is coming at a very important time as the **Scottish Fingerprint Service** seeks to establish itself as a credible organisation to experts throughout Scotland and to the Crown Office and others who use its services. Equally importantly public confidence in Scotland's forensic services is being undermined at a time when the **Scottish Executive** is seeking powers to allow the retention of fingerprint and DNA information on suspects who are subsequently cleared or have no action taken against them.

<http://www.shirleymckie.com/documents/TheHerald17.10.05.pdf>

<http://www.shirleymckie.com/documents/DailyMail18.10.05.pdf>

- It is interesting to note that **MSP Alex Neil**, one of Shirley's long time supporters, has tabled a number of questions within the Scottish Parliament about the involvement of **SCRO personnel** in the **Lockerbie investigation** during the late 1990's. The conviction of **Abdelbaset Ali Mohamed Al-Megrahi** has been criticised from many quarters including long time campaigner **Dr Jim Swire** and **Robert Black** the renowned emeritus professor of Scots Law at Edinburgh University. Failure to satisfactorily address these challenges has allowed conspiracy theories to abound. Should we be surprised therefore that the failure of the authorities to deal with the SCRO experts and their supervisors, (some of whom had possibly been involved in fingerprint examinations at Lockerbie), in the wake of Shirley's 'not guilty' finding in 1999 has led to theories connecting that failure to some form of Lockerbie cover up.  
<http://www.shirleymckie.com/documents/AlexNeilquestions27.10.05.pdf>
- This week Iain has responded to **media comment** about the security problems related to **biometric data bases** being created in the UK in response to the terrorist threat and the introduction of identity cards. He emphasises that while the databases in themselves can be justified in some respects some of the technology and human expertise critical to their compilation, maintenance and development is open to criticism and these flaws represent a very real threat of injustice.  
<http://www.shirleymckie.com/documents/Scotsman29.10.05.pdf>
- It seems that the **Fingerprint Society** has not listened to the doubts expressed about allowing the **Scottish Fingerprint Service** to help arrange the Society's **annual conference** at the **Scottish Police College** in Tulliallan, Fife in March of next year. Regular readers of this update will remember that Iain wrote to the Society earlier this year asking them to postpone the event given that Shirley's civil hearing – at which a number of Fingerprint Service personnel were central witnesses - was due to finish only two weeks before the conference. It was argued that the Society was in a way endorsing the Fingerprint Service at a time when a large question mark hung over the activities of some of its members.  
[http://www.shirleymckie.com/documents/FingerprintSocietyDebate\\_003.pdf](http://www.shirleymckie.com/documents/FingerprintSocietyDebate_003.pdf)  
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