

## **Iain's Personal Reflections**

An interesting week started with a very encouraging meeting with Shirley's legal team. Clearly focussed on the 5 week civil hearing in February 2006 some concern was expressed at the almost total lack of co-operation being received from the Scottish Ministers legal team and the Scottish Criminal Records Office. Nothing new here then!

Further court action is planned to recover documents and have witnesses interviewed. This action should be unnecessary but for some reason there appears to be a failure by the other side to follow through on undertakings. It is extremely easy to be suspicious about their motives and it is hard to understand why they are throwing yet more money at defending the indefensible. Can't think why the phrase 'you can run but you cannot hide' keeps popping up in my mind.

It is good to see arrangements are being made to precognose important witnesses like the Lord Advocate, Justice Minister and the various Chief Constables who have been involved in this saga over the years. I look forward to seeing these witnesses isolated in the witness box without their civil servants and advisers – could be interesting!

I left the meeting encouraged that despite the opposition there is a real determination that at last the truth will be heard and the guilty revealed.

Meanwhile in the Scottish Parliament MSP's like Alasdair Morgan, Fergus Ewing and Alex Neil supported by Michael Russell, from outside the parliament, continue to develop cross party links with other politicians. Don't seem to be too many from the Labour ranks as yet but I remain hopeful. At present they are examining a complaint I have made about the conduct of the Lord Advocate Colin Boyd. My feeling is that Mr Boyd's neutrality has been seriously compromised over the past few years and unfortunately this has led to Shirley's legal team being denied important evidence. I wonder if the Executive is up to stopping hiding behind the sub judice rule for a change and will practice open government by tackling the important constitutional issues I have raised.

With so many problems in the world it never fails to humble and amaze me how people have the time and inclination to write to Shirley with their support and encouragement. That many of them see the seeds of Shirley's problems in the current political culture of spin and prevarication encouraged at the heart of government is disturbing but probably very near to the truth.

I am looking forward to meeting fingerprint experts from across Canada and the US next year when I speak at the Canadian Identification Society Conference in Calgary in July. In March the venue is Liverpool for the Socio-Legal Studies Association Annual Conference at the University of Liverpool.

Meeting experts from across the world is an uplifting experience. To a man and woman these experts condemn SCRO for their failure to be open and accountable. Their concern is that this rotten apple is in danger of infecting the barrel.

**Iain McKie 2.12.04**