



SLS Insight: Get to know your Committee

This issue, we discuss all things work, home and Surrey Law Society with our Director and Honorary Secretary, Kieran Bowe.

Photo: Kieran Bowe

Why did you join the SLS Committee?

I remember it well as it was late summer 2008, around the time of the collapse of Lehman Brothers and the ensuing financial crisis; they were very difficult times for all, including the legal profession. I am proud of the work and commitment shown by the Committee in supporting the profession in challenging times - this was the trigger for me.

What do you enjoy most about being on the Committee?

Meeting and engaging with other members of SLS. I have made many friends and professional contacts over the past 10 years and really feel I am a better lawyer for those shared experiences.

What are you looking for in new Committee members?

Committee members should have energy, integrity, be innovative, creative and independently minded. I would encourage anyone who is interested to be in touch, it is rewarding and worthwhile.

Tell us a little bit about the SLS Legal Awards and why people should nominate.

The Committee wanted to find a way to recognise and promote the wide range of skills and talent the Surrey legal sector has to offer. The categories are designed to encourage nominations irrespective of whether you are a small or large firm or whether you are just starting out in the profession.

The Legal awards are an opportunity to showcase innovative and best practice from our members.

When & why did you become interested in the law?

I was working for a professional consultancy in Frankfurt in 2000 and spent much time working with lawyers on commercial contracts. After a fantastic year in Frankfurt, I enrolled at the College of Law and never looked back.

What firm do you work at and what is your role there?

Partner in the Private Client group at Russell-Cooke in Kingston upon Thames.

What is the most enjoyable part of your role?

Private Client work is diverse and no two days are the same; we deal with real problems faced by real people. What I find most rewarding is getting to know individuals and their families and helping them with their personal affairs and succession planning. There is a real human element to the work we do, but at the same time it is an intellectually demanding and a rapidly changing field.

What's been your most memorable career highlight to date?

I recently completed the review of a will for a longstanding client to whom I was first introduced as a trainee. My client,

who was already retired, had been advised by her accountant to consider sharing arrangements of the family home with one of her children to save inheritance tax. The tax advice was sound however, through our discussions, I was able to find out my client was concerned about their child's marriage. I advised alternative planning for inheritance tax, which was implemented. Years later the child's marriage did sadly end in divorce and when I see my client she always acknowledges how grateful she is that she did not make a gift of a share of her home. It is essential to get to know your clients and what is important to them.

What's been your hardest challenge career-wise?

Like so many working parents, it is balancing personal and professional life, I don't always get it right (too many dinners in the dog) but I try.

What are the biggest challenges facing the legal profession in the next 10 years?

Access to Justice and Legal Aid. I fear there will have to be a significant miscarriage of justice before this issue takes traction with the press. Perceived challenges will also create opportunities, we are just beginning to understand how technology and A.I. will impact our working lives and will change how we deliver advice and services to clients.

What's your favourite film?

Goodfellas

What did you want to be when you grew up?

Ayrton Senna

What would your autobiography be called?

My friends might say BMT (Bowe Mean Time). I am nearly always the last to arrive at the restaurant.

Name the 3 celebrities you most admire:

For their achievements -

1. Nye Bevan
2. Barack Obama
3. Elon Musk

What is your most treasured possession?

They are not possessions but my wife, daughter (4) and son (3 months) are most precious to me.

What's a great book you've read recently?

I have not read it yet, but a friend has written a heartfelt and comical autobiographical account of leaving her life as a fashion buyer in London to look after her father, who was suffering with dementia in rural Wales; 'My Mad Dad' is next on my reading list.

What do you think is the greatest invention of all time and why?

It is certainly not the greatest invention of all time but I cannot imagine life without my phone, I get very grumpy when I can't find it.

What is your favourite day of the week and why?

Despite the early start, it must be Saturday. I prepare breakfast for my four year old daughter (she enjoys porridge with honey from Russell-Cooke's very own beehives) before dashing out the door for swimming lessons at 8:30. After swimming, as a family, we head out to Ascot or Virginia Water for Brunch before racing to Windsor; we often make it to ballet lessons with just moments to spare. The afternoons are for family time, we may head to the park or take a walk together. We finish the day with a family dinner at home or at one of our favourite family restaurants.

Would you be interested in joining the Surrey Law Society Committee? We meet approximately 4 times a year, alternating between Guildford and Kingston, plus the AGM in November. The main role of the Committee is to oversee the strategic and practical management of the Society.

The Officers and Members of the Board work together with the CEO to deliver a programme of CPD and Social Events throughout the year. The Board is responsible for responding to consultations and for lobbying on behalf of the wider Surrey membership. We provide support for members experiencing problems, help them with job searches and assist with complaints.

What would you do if you were invisible for a day?

Not change any nappies.

What three items would you take to a desert island?

I am no Bear Grylls - I would take 20 Marlboro Lights, a good bottle of Rioja and hope Uber Eats deliver

What is one thing you wish you had known when you were younger?

To invest in Apple.

What would you be lost without?

Google Maps

What instantly puts you in a good mood?

Jump Around by House of Pain ...I grew up in the 90s

Kieran Bowe

Honorary Secretary, Surrey Law Society;
Partner, Russell-Cooke Solicitors

There are also a number of Sub Committees that report to the Board including: Quo Vadis Strategy Group, Conveyancing & Land Law, Financial and Social. You do not have to be a full Committee member to serve on a Sub Committee.

To find out how you can get involved and how you might contribute to the work of the Society, we invite you to come along as an observer to 2 meetings before making any decisions. If you would like to find out more about the work of the Committee or the Society, please do not hesitate to contact **Helen Opie** at helen.opie@surreylawsociety.org.uk or complete the application form below.