

Russell-Cooke

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Date 16 February 2017

Publication The Times

Type of publication National

THE TIMES

Lawyer of the week John Gould

John Gould, the senior partner at Russell-Cooke, acted for the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), in the case against the human rights lawyer Phil Shiner in the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal, which struck him off having found 22 charges of professional misconduct, including dishonesty, proved against him. It is thought to be one of the most expensive cases brought by the SRA.

What were the main challenges? The enormous quantity of documentation covering the seven-year period that ended with the al-Sweady

public inquiry, which rejected allegations of murder and torture against British soldiers; and ensuring that hearings were, so far as possible, held in public rather than private.

What's the best decision you've taken? To live and work in the same area — making time for practice and family.

Who has inspired you? Lord Neuberger, for his contribution to English law and for his natural modesty and approachability — and because he very kindly wrote the foreword to my book, *The Law of Legal Services*.



What's the oddest thing that has happened to you? Many years ago I sat in on a meeting between the firm's senior partner and two clients. He talked through the prospects for litigation in the most discouraging terms — outcome uncertain, costs potentially enormous, etc.

Whenever they tried, ashen-faced, to interrupt he'd say: "If I may just finish..." and carry on. Eventually he opened the file, quickly shut it again, and asked the clients to excuse us for a moment. These clients shared an unusual name with other clients — they'd actually come in to make will.

What's the best advice you've received? Others may judge whether it was good advice, but my tutor at Cambridge advised me

strongly not to become a solicitor.

Which three qualities should a lawyer have? Attention to detail, obviously. The courage to get to grips with the unfamiliar. Pride in the role of lawyers in providing access to justice and maintaining the rule of law.

What law would you enact? Working in London, I'm keen to see existing laws relating to air quality more rigorously enforced.

How would you like to be remembered? For helping to build a firm that has the luxury of acting in accordance with its conscience.

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