

- Ranked in the Top Division of Sets of Chambers by the Legal 500 (2009)
- Largest Set on the Northern Circuit
 - 3rd Largest Set in the Country
 - 3 Locations
 - 6 Practice groups
 - 22 Silks
 - 156 Barristers
- One St John's Buildings

Who are we?

St Johns Buildings is the largest set of barrister's Chambers in the North of England, with over 150 members and 40 support staff.

Chambers sprung from the successful mergers of 3 prominent Manchester sets and a Chester set. They each had their own distinct history and character.

28 St. John Street had developed remarkably quickly from somewhat avant garde beginnings in the 1940s to command widespread respect and renown.

Drive and ambition on the part of its members combined with a strong administration at 24a St John Street enabled it to achieve great prominence during the 1980s and 1990s mainly in crime but with strong representation in other common law areas.

Merchant Chambers emerged as a force to be reckoned with in the 1990s shaped by members who were determined to establish a business friendly, Manchester based, specialist commercial law service.

Whitefriars Chambers was established in 1961. In the intervening years, Chambers developed into a General Common Law set of 24 members with a strong reputation in crime, family and civil work across North Wales, Cheshire and Shropshire. Previous members include Sir Maurice Kay, Lord Justice of Appeal.

The joinder of these four entities and the arrival of 10 members of the former Queens Chambers has resulted in a vibrant and exciting super set in which the best qualities of all its former entities have combined to create a chambers which we believe to be far superior than the sum of its parts.

Chambers offer a wide range of services and each barrister belongs to at least one of six different practice groups. The practice groups are:

- i) Family
- ii) Employment
- iii) Crime
- iv) Personal Injury
- v) Commercial
- vi) Public/Administrative

One of our greatest strengths is that each individual barrister benefits from being part of a cohesive team within a large, multidisciplinary set of chambers. This means that we can offer expertise and experience in a wide range of areas, with each area complimenting and informing others. It also means that we are able to consider trainee applications in each of our specialist areas.

We have a long history, which is testament to our commitment to quality, which is a commitment that we expect from every member of SJB.

Did you know?

Michael Redfern QC is currently Chairing the independent inquiry into human tissue analysis in UK nuclear facilities (The Redfern Inquiry) and also Chaired the Royal Liverpool Children's Inquiry (Alder Hey Inquiry).

Jeff Samuels QC successfully represented Barry George in his retrial for the murder of television personality Jill Dando.

David Berkley QC is a past Chairman of the Northern Circuit Commercial Bar Association.

Hannah Wood represented Great Britain Athletics team as an under 23 athlete and continues to compete for her local club.

St Johns Buildings raised £16,000 for the National Society for Epilepsy in 2008 through events including the Great Manchester Run (in which more than 50 members of Chambers and staff took part).

Members of St Johns Buildings*

Michael Redfern QC	Clare Grundy	Susan Machin
Howard Bentham QC	Lisa Partington	Susan Deas
Michael Shorrocks QC	Andrew Fox	John Ratledge
David Lane QC	Richard Carter	Linda Sweeney
David Berkley QC	Patrick Thompson	Lorraine Cavanagh
Richard Marks QC	David Potter	Andrew Bridgman
Anthony Hayden QC	Jonathan Thompson	Kirsty Negus
Sarah Singleton QC	Alastair Wright	Natasha Leach
Andrew O'Byrne QC	Matthew Mawdsley	Clare Porter-Phillips
Jeffrey Samuels QC	Mark Roberts	Oliver King
Philip Cattan	William Baker	Sylvia Vir Singh
Mark Lamberty	Magdalen Case	Audrey Van der Haer
Richard Humphry	Sally Harrison	David Pojur
Roger Green	Andrew Green	Jennifer Blewitt
John Hedgecoe	Richard Norton	Neil Montaldo
John McNeill	Alexander Kloss	Rosie Stringer
Eric Shannon	Guy Mathieson	Ian Skeate
Antony Longworth	Myles Wilson	Paul Smith
Philip Grundy	Jason Searle	Christopher Moss
David Mercer	Richard Tyrrell	James Malam
David Uff	Ginnette Fitzharris	Paul Hodgkinson
Andrew Long	Henry Blackshaw	Ben Lawrence
Julian Holt	Richard Orme	Kashif Ali
Sonia Gal	Joanna Rodikis	Abigail Hudson
Maurice Greene	Mark Connor	Patrick Ryan
David Garside	Daniel Frieze	Louise Quigley
David Bruce	Annette Gumbs	Jennifer Newstead
Peter Harrison	Steven Wild	Jonathan Butters
Aftab Khawar	Francesca Fothergill	Timothy Connolly
Hugh McKee	Stephen Douglas	William Poole
Bernadette Goodman	Gary Reynolds	Philippa Waddell
Brian McKenna	Robert McGinty	Adam Watkins
Keith Harrison	Karl Rowley	Paul Murphy
Julian Shaw	Lisa Houghton	Jane Greenhalgh
David Pickup	Nigel Booth	Lucy Marshall
Julian Lloyd	Carl Hargan	Debra White
Richard Gray	Andrew Lawson	Neil Christian
Diana Kloss MBE (Associated Member)	Pauline McHugh	Gareth Thompson
John Chaplin	Philip Parry	Steven McGarry
John Oates	Charlotte Crangle	James Booth
Julian Taylor	Pépin Aslett	Christopher Pare
Jeremy Grout-Smith	Darrel Crilley	Tim Wilkinson
Jonathan Dickinson	Jeremy Roussak	Ben Kelly
Jane Walker	Hilary Manley	Louise Scott
Tim Brennan	Ghazan Mahmood	Andrew Perfect
Jane Dagnall	Remy Zentar	Hannah Wood
Bunty Batra	Sarah Spear	Henry Vanderpump
Charles Eastwood	Simon Parry	Julian Goode
Simon Crabtree	Paula Tyler	Simon Murray
Paula Davitt	Patrick Buckley	Kevin McNerney
Peter Smith	David Bentley	Elisabeth Cooper
Anne Britcliffe	Susanne Muth	
	Alexandra Simmonds	

*Not including Associate Members

Why should you choose SJB?

St Johns Buildings are a friendly, efficient set, based in 3 great locations. We have been instrumental in developing the super-set model to create a stable future and, as a result, we are able to offer that future to prospective pupils. The Legal 500 has recognised our efforts in this regard.

Feedback from previous pupils has been extremely encouraging. We are noted as providing a supportive environment in which pupils can flourish and learn.

Our pupils are very sought after and very busy as a result, providing real and diverse training. Of the two pupils in our 2007-08 intake, our Criminal team pupil spent 115 of a possible 125 days in court and our civil pupil spent 120 of a possible 128 days in court, all undertaken with the support and supervision of committed pupil masters and clerks.

We offer a rich and diverse training package in a professional and friendly environment. The real question is; Why not us?

What are we looking for?

We are looking for commitment, passion, intelligence and drive. We expect candidates to have a minimum 2:1 degree, although we will take into account exceptional circumstances. We also look for a good mix of legal experience, life experience and academic achievement.

Will a Mini-pupillage make a difference?

We recommend that applicants for pupillage should try to complete a mini-pupillage in Chambers. Mini-pupillages are a great way for Chambers to get to know the applicants but also for the applicants to get to know Chambers. The fact that a mini-pupillage has not been completed will not be held against any applicant who is otherwise perfect for Chambers, but applicants who have not completed a mini-pupillage may be requested to undertake a mini-pupillage before a decision is made about the offer of pupillage. Anyone wanting a mini-pupillage should write to the chief clerk requesting a mini-pupillage and enclosing a CV.

We are committed to diversity and equal opportunities and candidates will not be judged on the basis of sex, race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability or any other ground.

What do we offer?

Most importantly for any applicant with real aspirations, we offer Pupillage with a view to tenancy. We have taken on 15 junior tenants in the last 3 years, with each of our pupils in this period being successful in their tenancy application. We are investing in our future as well as our pupils'.

Each Pupil can expect to earn at least £30,000. We offer £6000 of funding during the first six months and minimum guaranteed billings of £24,000 during the second six months.

We offer the opportunity to be part of one of the biggest and most diverse sets of Chambers in the country.

A year in the life of a pupil...

What happens during the 1 year pupillage?

The 1 year training period is split into 2 halves. The first 6 months give a pupil a chance to learn about the Bar and life in Chambers as well as their specialist chosen area of law, under close supervision from a pupil supervisor, who is a specialist in that field. This will include working on cases with their supervisor and learning from them. The second 6 month period will see pupils owning and carrying out advocacy on cases and representing clients, with close supervision from their pupil master.

The pupil's progress will be monitored on a continual basis throughout the whole of the pupillage by the pupil supervisor.

We offer monthly review meetings with the Chief Clerk, to ensure that you feel that you are getting the most out of your pupillage.

Formal monitoring will take place every three months, so that the pupil and pupil supervisor can assess the progress of the pupil by reference to a pupillage checklist so as to:-

- (i) identify which areas of work have been covered;
- (ii) identify which areas of work remain to be covered and discuss how this will be achieved;
- (iii) give the pupil and pupil supervisor an opportunity to comment in writing generally on all or any matter relating to the conduct of pupillage.

This way we can ensure that you get the best training possible.

Towards the end of the second six months of the pupillage period the Pupillage Committee will meet with the pupil supervisor and the Head of Chambers to review the progress of the pupil.

Case Study: Andrew Perfect

The first day was nerve-wracking, of course. But everyone at St Johns Buildings went out of their way to make sure I knew what was expected of me. Looking back, I think I was more excited to be starting than nervous. That said, the scariest thing I did all pupillage I did on my first day – I had to carry a cup of sugar from one meeting room to another, up a flight of stairs. If I'd spilt that cup of sugar...

My first six was with Richard Norton. Richard does high value personal injury work. His cases were generally fascinating and it was a real privilege to watch a respected practitioner do their work. I was also given paperwork, which Richard would check and suggest improvements. He was a natural teacher.

One of the peculiarities of (any) pupillage is that the work done by the pupil supervisor is a few years down the line. Because of that St Johns Buildings have a specific programme in the first six to ensure junior practitioners have a good understanding of the work they will be doing in their second six and beyond. This is massively helpful, and also serves as a great way to get to know your peer group. My second six was fantastic fun. I was in court every day, doing all kinds of civil work, from small claims trials and the Mags to directions hearings in high value cases.

The structure of pupillage is excellent. It is well thought out and provides an excellent grounding and great preparation for life at the bar. The clerks too are very thoughtful, gradually increasing the complexity and value of cases given and regularly seeking feedback.

The amount and variety of work is also excellent. I undertook a huge variety of work in both sixes. I was never idle, but nor did I ever feel as though I was under too much work pressure.

I have been able to be involved in cases at all levels and was able to watch Richard being led by a QC in the Court of Appeal. It was a tragic case, seeking damages on behalf of an astonishing young man who had been very badly disabled from birth.

But more than the structure of pupillage or the variety of work, it is the friendliness of St Johns Buildings which, for me, sets it apart. After numerous mini-pupillages only SJB came across as genuinely friendly. From a mini-pupillage, through interview and pupillage and into practice, it is clear that SJB is a place that prides itself on combining the highest standard of professionalism with a friendly and unstuffy approach.

Case Study: Henry Vanderpump

The first day was naturally daunting but I was instantly put at ease when I was met in the waiting room by the Chief Clerk Chris Ronan. He took me through an induction and told me what I could expect of the year and then took me upstairs to meet my Pupil Master Daniel Frieze. At St Johns Buildings you have the same Pupil Master for the year and you'll be the only pupil they have so the relationship you form is very important. I really fell on my feet as Daniel and I got on very well and he specialised in personal injury work which was where I wanted to practice.

During the first six months of pupillage I shadowed Daniel, being given an opportunity to have a go preparing court work and written advices and attending court with him. In addition I was able to follow other members of chambers if they had particularly interesting cases on and help them with research and calls would often come through from senior members of chambers at court needing urgent research done. Towards the end of the six months I spent 2 weeks with a member from each of the other practice groups to make sure that I received a rounded pupillage.

In my second six I hit the ground running as right from the start I was in court everyday doing a range of work and receiving a number of written instructions each week. In total I was out of court for just 3 days in 6 months! I was generally in the County Courts on trials and applications in civil cases but I also did a little bit of crime in the Magistrates Court.

All in a day's work...

As an example of what I faced, on one occasion I went to Nottingham County Court to represent the Defendant in a misrepresentation case about a canal boat. The Claimant appeared in person and part way through the trial produced a large section of the boat engine from under his desk.

The 3 best things about being a pupil at St Johns Buildings are:

- 1) The structure of the pupillage; you have a monthly meeting, get allocated a desk, a Pupil Master who does the kind of work you want to do, given a diary and an email account and told if there is anything you need to improve and what you're doing well.
- 2) The amount and variety of work; to be in court everyday is amazing and means you develop very quickly as a barrister, and the size of chambers means that there is a chance to try out other practice areas.
- 3) The friendly environment; from the start I went to chambers lunch every day, made friends and got lots of support from other members of chambers.

Who would be your pupil supervisor?

We are deliberately flexible as to who is the best pupil supervisor for any particular intake. The Management Committee decides the number and practice areas of pupillages to be offered for the coming year and invites suitable members of Chambers to be pupil supervisor. The members are selected on the basis of the quality of their practice, their ability to provide guidance and support and their ability to relate with others. Only the highest quality practitioners are selected for this role.

Our pupil supervisors will be familiar with and act in accordance with Part II of the Pupillage Guidelines at Annex A to the Bar Council's Code of Conduct. He/she will ensure to the best of his/her ability that any pupil receives experience, instruction and advice in accordance with the appropriate pupillage checklist and they will use their best endeavours to introduce pupils to colleagues and professional clients.

What do the guides say about pupillage at SJB?

“Overall, chambers' approach is simple: “We expect people to learn from experience” and “we want them to get used to working hard from the beginning of the second six.” By the end of pupillage the idea is to have produced “analytical, competent practitioners who know the law and who can present a succinct and coherent case. They won't be the finished article but they'll hopefully be on their way.””

And what about the quality of work?

“Unless you're looking to develop a specialist practice in, say, tax or media law the circuit can more than sustain an ambitious advocate.”

“The circuit, and the wider professional community in Manchester, is also said to have a sense of community unmatched by London.”

(The Chambers Student Guide 2008)

What is the process?

How do you apply to become a pupil and what should you expect the process to be?

The timetable is simple:

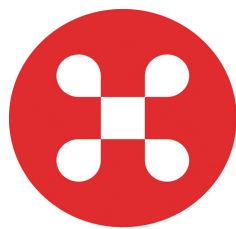
Date	Step	Did you know?
September 2009	Chambers agrees the number of necessary pupils.	We have taken at least 2 pupils for the past 3 years and aim to continue to do the same going forwards.
September	Pupillages are advertised	Chambers is a member of the Bar Council's On-Line Pupillage Application Scheme (OLPAS). All applications for pupillage are made either through the OLPAS Scheme, Pupilage.com or our Chambers' Website
30 October	Closing date for applications	
13 November	Date by which all applications are acknowledged.	Our pupillage committee is responsible for the sift. It is made up of at least 3 of our leading barristers as well as the Chief Clerk
December	The applicants are sifted	The first interview is a short and snappy interview, undertaken by members of the pupillage committee. Each interview lasts 15 minutes at the most, with a series of set questions to be answered by each candidate We ask for references for everyone who is invited for interview. However, references will only be considered after the first interview has taken place and a preliminary view has been reached
December	1 st Interview	Our second interview is designed to test your developing skills as a barrister and includes a role play element with a legal problem, which will be provided half an hour before the interview. The problem is designed to test your analytical and communication skills and not your legal knowledge of the subject matter. Second interviews are conducted by the pupillage committee plus at least two additional members of Chambers, including at least one Silk.
December-January	2 nd Interview	We aim to send out offer letters as soon as possible (and in-line with any restrictions under the OLPAS rules. We will also select 2 reserve candidates.
January	Offer letters sent	
September 2010	Pupillage Commences!	

So do you have what it takes?

- 1. Academic and intellectual ability.**
- 2. Diversity of intellectual pursuits and breadth of character.**
- 3. Suitable temperament.**
- 4. Commitment, motivation and stamina.**
- 5. The right presentation.**
- 6. Excellent communication and advocacy skills.**

If you have what it takes, St Johns Buildings has everything you are looking for and much more to offer.

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