The image shows a fragment of an old document with cursive handwriting. The text is partially obscured by large blue text. At the bottom, there are four red wax seals on a blue ribbon. The visible text includes: "The solemn Ratifications of the present Treaty, expedited in good & due manner, shall be exchanged between the Six Months or longer if need shall be computed from the Day of the Signature of the said Treaty. I Witness Henry Potomac, Ambassador Extraordinary, and in Virtue of our Full Power signed with our Hands the present Definitive Treaty, and under the Seals of our Arms DONE at Paris, this third Day of September, 1763. I Hanley John Adams, B Franklin, John Jay".

# Without Authority Barry Worrall

*Fathers 4 Justice : misguided ?  
- this book gets to the reality*

**A documentary  
interspersed with anecdotes from  
one man's account of the period**

# **Without Authority**

**Barry Worrall**

**A documentary of reform in family law  
Supported by anecdotes from an ordinary man**

**A stark awakening**

**The early years of the men's rights movement  
Including conjecture on the future**

First published in the United Kingdom in 2004

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Barry Worrall

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Cover graphics : Treaty of Paris 1783, which established the independence of the USA. Source : the USA's National Archive and Records Administration (NARA), website [www.ourdocuments.gov](http://www.ourdocuments.gov) contains download.

*Men wanted for hazardous journey.*

*Small wages, bitter cold, long months  
of complete darkness, constant danger,  
safe return doubtful.*

*Honour and recognition in case of  
success.*

*Ernest Shackleton*

Sir Ernest Shackleton 1874 - 1922, Irish explorer

Reputed newspaper advertisement, before  
Shackleton's 1914-16 Antarctic expedition.

He is reported to have said afterwards :

*It seemed as though all the men in Great Britain  
were determined to accompany me,  
the response was so overwhelming.*

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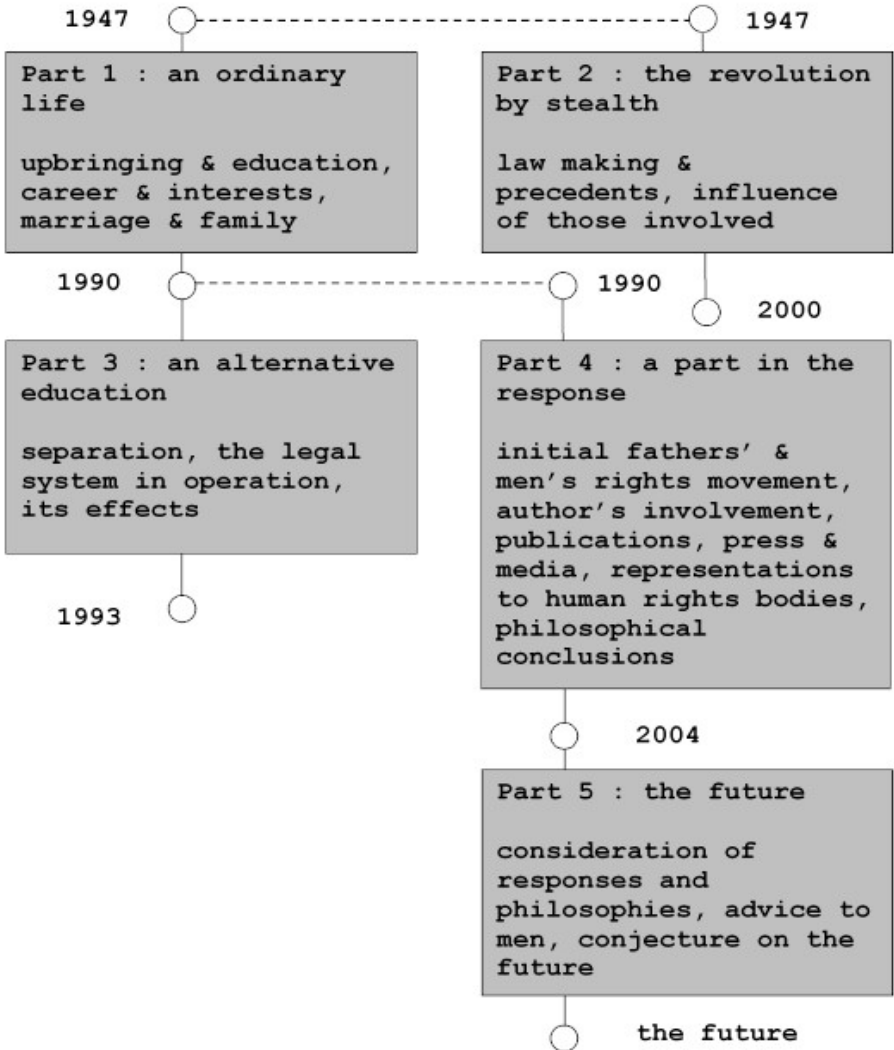
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# Timechart



## Foreword

Barry's story needs telling. He refers to it as *anecdotes from an ordinary man*. In one sense it is, because Barry's story is that of millions of men in the UK today; decent, well-educated, law abiding, family men, the salt of the earth who, through no fault of their own, have had their lives torn apart by a corrupt family law system.

But, in another sense, Barry's story is not that of an ordinary man. Unlike most ordinary men, Barry decided to do something about it and he has spent the past 14 years campaigning tirelessly to change things. I have worked with Barry for a large part of that time at close quarters and I have seen him put up with the most appalling frustrations and battles, not only with politicians and lawyers but also with other men's groups who have often failed to understand what is going on and have been ill-equipped to fight the powerful enemy bent on destroying them.

The first men's family law reform group was Families Need Fathers which was set up in 1974 at the time when the post-1969 reforms had started to bite. Men were finding themselves, through no fault of their own, stripped of their children, homes and income and being left heartbroken and destitute. Its problem was that it had objectives that were far too limited and it failed to understand its enemy. It took the line that the best way forward was appeasement and discussion. It is a sobering thought that, in thirty years, little or nothing has been accomplished. As I write, I have just received an email from a new group called Fathers 4 Justice which is fighting the same fight.

Barry's account is unique. He gives a very sound historical account of family law reform, starting with the Labour Government's liberalising agenda of the late 1960s, and blends this with events in his own life - the normal events of a young professional man. The plain innocence of Barry's life contrasts starkly with the underhand scheming of the judiciary who pursued their agenda relentlessly and against the wishes of Parliament to strip men of all rights within marriage and create the mother and her child as the only family unit now recognised in law as legitimate. The coming together of these two series of historical events in Barry's case was shocking.

It is difficult to see what is going to happen to our society. Not only have the reformers got things badly wrong, they fail to acknowledge this and continue in a state akin to neurotic obsession. When I gave evidence to the Law Commission on their proposal to extend wives' property rights to the unmarried, I pointed out that every one of their predictions regarding the impact of their reforms on society had failed to come about and asked if they felt they were doing the right thing. The chairman of the meeting just looked at me and failed to answer.

It is hard to get inside the head of someone who appears to operate in a manner so completely at odds with the tenets of science, engineering and all human endeavour based on a rational link between action and consequence. All I can say is that progress will not be made until such individuals are removed from positions of influence. I hope and pray that Barry's account will help in some way towards this goal.

John Champion  
Hindhead, Surrey  
March 2004

# Acknowledgements

*Thanks for the memory.*

Leo Robin 1899 - 1985, American songwriter

Title of song, written with Ralph Rainger, 1937

There are many that should receive credit as contributing to this volume, in one way or another.

On the one hand those personal friends and family, such as Gerry Fenwick and Hilary Dawson of Newcastle, my parents, my sister Janice and her husband Michael, who all gave support through the years. The colleagues that I have worked with at Northumbria University.

And especially to those who encouraged : Liz ‘Cotty’ Davison, from Wensleydale, who kindly suggested many useful revisions, and proof-read the early drafts; and others who proof-read the later drafts in some detail.

And those others, in the various fathers’ and men’s rights groups, who gave their stories, their ideas, their time and effort, to allow us all to know. We need to thank all of them for at least understanding what has been going on. They may have given an opportunity for remedies.

On the other hand, by far the greatest credit must go to Dr John  
Campion, who mentored and guided, set strategy and tactics, and  
kept us to the fundamental principles. Only after his input did we  
realise what it was all about.

# Prologue

*News is the first rough draft of history.*

Philip L Graham 1915 - 63,  
American newspaper publisher

From *The Washington Post*, 24 November 1985

This brief book takes the form of a documentary with personal anecdotes. It is in five parts :

1. a sketch autobiography, 1947-1990;
2. a contemporary documentary account of developments in law, 1947-2000;
3. the author's own legal case, 1990-1993; followed by
4. his involvement in the initial men's rights movement, 1990-2004;
5. conjecture on the future, 2004+, which includes the author's own ideals.

The book emphasises the difference in cultures between ordinary men and women, including this man of ordinary background, but of some education, and those who have influenced and developed matrimonial and family law. It relates the author's naïvety, his 'stark awakening' to what had been going on behind our backs, as this has been 'without authority' and often by stealth. It covers his own, and the various men's groups' response to their experiences.

This is a story that should be of interest to those who value the rights of ordinary folk to determine their own lives, to determine the laws which affect their own rights and responsibilities, including those related to a central component of their lives, marriage and the family. And those who wish to do this without interference by others.

If some of the few subject professionals also find interest, and would like further detail, they only have to ask.

Much of the book is written direct from memory, except for those sections which are obviously researched historical legal records, or quotations from other works. The author owns that memory is not always good in detail. But it is believed that the broad narrative is true, and does not contain departures from reality in the substance. I apologise to anyone who remembers the detail better than myself. I invite them to contact me.

Everyone has some unpleasant episodes and characters in their recall. I have left most out, except where they are relevant to the theme of the book.

## **The news headlines**

The book is about issues that have not been given adequate coverage in the press and media. The issues should have been headline news, as they fundamentally affect the lives of the majority of the population. Not only have the issues hardly been covered, but most of the media commentary is actually hostile to any mention that there are problems, or that men should have rights. So the story will be news for most people. Because of this, and because of the novel character of the account, it has been



written largely in non-technical terms, and in an informal style to be readily assimilated and accessible to those who are unfamiliar with the subject.

The operation of a democratic country, in which the people decide the laws they want, relies on the press and media reporting to the people what is going on. Without this reporting, the people can't assert their wishes. No one can know what needs to be done for the benefit of the country.

It is wished that the news in this book is passed to the next generation, so that they will be wiser than the present.

Barry Worrall  
Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne  
April 2004

# The stories behind the news

*And that's the way it is.*

Walter Cronkite 1916 - , American broadcaster

Sign-off line for CBS TV programme  
*Evening News*, 1962 - 81

This account will understandably bring out the inquisitiveness of many, who may reasonably ask for further information, and question whether this really is 'the way it is'. The author wishes to provide the further information as readily as possible. Hence the most significant reports from Cheltenham Group (CG) have been placed on the group's website.

Those who would like to understand in greater depth, or who demand evidence, are therefore readily able to obtain this from the group's website at <http://www.c-g.org.uk>. And those who wish to get involved may contact the author via this same website. We've now thankfully got the technology, affordable technology at that, for ordinary folk to network with each other quickly and effectively, and to exchange information and views. So we don't rely on the mainstream press and media, who often fail the people they are supposed to serve.

To help with access to this information, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) is given for Cheltenham Group publications within the references :

- [1] *The Emperor's New Clothes*, The Cheltenham Group, 1996.  
Available at [www.c-g.org.uk/publics/tenc/report.htm](http://www.c-g.org.uk/publics/tenc/report.htm).
- [2] *The NAPO 'Anti-sexism' Policy & Lack of Available Remedies*, The Cheltenham Group, 1998.  
Available at [www.c-g.org.uk/publics/tenc/annex4.htm](http://www.c-g.org.uk/publics/tenc/annex4.htm).
- [3] *Submission to the United Nations Human Rights Commission : Violations of Articles 23 & 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) by the United Kingdom (UK)*, The Cheltenham Group, 1999.  
Available at [www.c-g.org.uk/camp/hr/iccpra23and7.htm](http://www.c-g.org.uk/camp/hr/iccpra23and7.htm).
- [4] *Restoring Control over matrimonial and family law*, The Cheltenham Group, 2002.  
Available at [www.c-g.org.uk/publics/rcomfl/report.htm](http://www.c-g.org.uk/publics/rcomfl/report.htm).

Reference [1] gives sound evidence that matrimonial and family law is in a degenerate state, and that the author's story is an ordinary case. References [2] and [3] give rationale about the problems involved. The last reference [4] may be considered an overview, and the reader is directed to this first. The website version of this reference has online hyperlinks to the others, which open a new browser window, and this facility allows the reader to browse both the overview and the detail.

All these reports have a synopsis, abstract or summary, which may be taken first, before any further browsing of the detail. They also have hyperlinks from their contents lists, to give easy navigation within the report.

For those who would prefer it, hardcopy of each is available on request from the Cheltenham Group.

## **Part 1 : an ordinary life : 1947 - 1990**

*Life must be lived forwards,  
but it can only be understood backwards.*

Sören Kierkegaard 1813 - 55, Danish philosopher

From a thought in *Journals and Papers*, Vol. 1, 1843

This is the story of a fairly ordinary life. It's not different from many others. For most of it, I've planned, worked and saved as many do, looking forward to a satisfactory life. I've invested time in recreation and keeping active. Mainly I've looked forward to the future. I've occasionally looked back.

### **Early life**

The family background was typical of the post war period in Newcastle upon Tyne. The earliest recollections are few. Including those of a flat shared with my grandmother, in the Stanhope Street area of Newcastle. Not then a sought after area. Vague memories of a long flight of stairs down to a backyard, gas mantles, my parents using candles to thaw out frozen pipes in winter. Trips to the Leazes Park to catch tiddlers.

The family escaped this to a new council flat on Slatyford Lane Estate. Dad did well. Born in 1921, he became a draughtsman with CA Parsons, the turbine manufacturer, and became head of the

drawing office there. When Parsons got involved in setting up the Anglo Great Lakes Carbon Corporation, he was invited to become their Works Engineer. He was there until he retired at 60.

Dad and Mum courted before the war. During the war, he was in the Fleet Air Arm helping to maintain aircraft, and became a Petty Officer on HMS Eagle, an aircraft carrier. She was in the Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF). Unusually, they met again in the war, while both posted to what was then Ceylon, and married in Galle, which is about 70 miles from Colombo. Mum managed to get a brief account of her time in the WRAF published, called *Lambs in Blue* [9].

Mum didn't work after marriage, and I was born in 1947, one of the baby-boomers after the war. So this was a traditional family arrangement which seemed to suit all. Mum was useful at making and fixing clothes, and did most of the cooking. Her bread rolls were popular with my school friends, who once ate a whole batch after school. She supported several ventures of mine, and once made a soft-top for a 1939 Morgan 4/4 that I rebuilt.

My sister Janice was born when I was 10, so Dad and Mum ended up with an ideal family, of one son and one daughter.

I remember only two grandparents, Dad's father, and Mum's mother. Of the two, my grandfather was more involved. He promised me one day that he'd help me with anything I wanted to do, hobbies, going to the flicks and so on. He bought me my first fishing tackle, for a birthday. We walked into John Robertson's in the Haymarket and asked for a complete outfit. I don't think I've done that since. It was a trout fly outfit with a greenheart rod and inexpensive reel. And he took me for my first day's fishing, at Felton on the Coquet. I still remember the spot where I caught my

first small brownie. If you know the river there, you'll know the Northumberland Arms near the bridge. As you walk on the south side of the river, from the pub and downstream, past the bridge there's a small descent immediately on the left which takes you down to the river.

Both grandparents died when I was a teenager. Grandfather collapsed of heart failure on a bus on the way home from his work at a shipyard. He was 64, so missed any retirement. Grandma lived longer, but I didn't see much of her.

## Teenage years

Mum and Dad bought their first house in 1958 when I was 11. It was a between-the-wars semi in Westerhope, then a village, now a suburb, just to the north-west of Newcastle. They still live there.

I passed the 11+ exam in that year, and as a result went to Rutherford Grammar School. I was bright but not naturally brilliant, and by hard work obtained six O-levels and three A-levels, modest grades. I remember teachers who were usually competent and occasionally excellent. Hodgson, or 'Hodgie', was the school's biology teacher, and even had flair. One day he described to us the malaria bug, transmitted by mosquitoes that lived in ponds or marshes and hung for part of their life cycle by surface tension near the pond surface. He asked if anyone had ideas on how to combat them. I suggested spraying detergent, as I'd recently learned that detergents reduce surface tension on water, so would cause the mosquitoes to sink. 'Hodgie' thought this a big contribution, got me to stand on a chair and tell the class about this good idea. He said that's what was actually done in malaria-affected countries. After I left school 'Hodgie' made the news.

Under the headline “Biology teacher dissects school cat” was the story that he’d done just that. However, what the newspaper article failed to mention was that the school caretaker’s cat had died of natural causes and ‘Hodgie’ had taken the opportunity to give the sixth-formers experience of dissection. I’d learned to treat newspaper articles with scepticism.

There was a feeling of security at home. My parents had stayed together, despite some difficulties and despite a modest standard of living. Divorce was a strange distant thing that only happened to other families. My Dad’s career was going well, my Mum didn’t need to work and was content with life at home. Being responsible for buying at Anglo Great Lakes, Dad received gifts from suppliers which arrived at Christmas time, usually a large turkey, sometimes two. And lots of bottles of whisky. He had a cupboard full of bottles, as they arrived faster than they were consumed, as he didn’t drink much, but appreciated an occasional whisky. It was a comfortable home, warm, and I remember plenty at Christmas time.

Fresh-water fishing was a particular interest. Introduced to trout fishing, my friends and me spent many Saturdays on the Tyne and Coquet. We’d save our pocket money for our membership of the Northumbrian Anglers’ Federation, which still exists, and for the bus fare and lunch. This gave us access to good stretches. In those days, the salmon didn’t run the Tyne as they do now, and anyone could afford permits for trout. I remember one day getting the bus to Rothbury, fishing the Coquet down to Pauperhaugh, then getting the bus home. And doing the same on the Tyne, starting at Hexham, fishing down to Corbridge. That was the day I saw what was probably a lamprey on the surface. As I hadn’t seen one before, it seemed an ugly head and unusual. Bait fishing with



worms and maggots was done on the few slower stretches of the Tyne, but mainly we fished fly for trout in faster water.

## Universities

My A-levels only just got me a place at university. This was in 1965, not for the BSc Physics that I'd applied for, but for BSc General Science at Newcastle. I'd included Newcastle on my UCAS form on advice, which I later regretted taking, as I thought it preferable to see more of life away from home. I'd obtained interviews at Lancaster, then just established, and York. Lancaster gave me a conditional offer, but York rejected. As things turned out, it was maybe just as well that I went to Newcastle.

During the holidays I had jobs on building sites, as a general labourer. I can claim to have helped build Newcastle's Civic Centre, carrying the wood laths onto the roof of the debating chamber, which were formed to give it the shape we see today. And the abattoir near Scotswood Road, which I think has been converted to another use since then. McAlpines were contracted to build the Civic Centre, and I had a job there at the Christmas break rather than the traditional post jobs which many students have. McAlpines were also contracted to build the headquarters for Northern Rock Building Society in Gosforth. As the surveyors were short of a chain boy, that's the one who holds the stripy pole, I was asked to act as chain boy for the marking out of the site. So my big claim to fame is that I helped position the Northern Rock building on its present situation. It was so cold that Christmas, and the surveyors and me had only an unheated wooden hut deposited on the site for shelter, that I spiked my flask of coffee with Cognac. The joke is, maybe that explains why the building is at an odd angle to the roads there.

Failing my second year exams at Newcastle in 1967 was a blow. So I got a job as an administrator in the labs at Winthrop Laboratories in Fawdon, Newcastle. In the labs, they looked into important things such as how little rose-hip syrup could be put into the bottles while still being allowed to label it 'Rose Hip Syrup'. I was given and used samples of a prototype anti-dandruff shampoo which contained, if I remember, 'Lenium' in it, which may now be a common ingredient.

After a year, I found one of the managers definitely didn't like me. I left of my own accord. This was, as it happened, a good move, as I soon obtained a job as Trainee Computer Programmer with the National Coal Board (NCB). This was in 1968. So I've now been in computing for over 30 years. There aren't many of us with that experience. There was a small group of us recruited with A-levels for these jobs. This introduction to computing also introduced me to something about myself.

At the time, all employees of the NCB were offered the use of facilities primarily available for miners, to examine the health of their chests. X-rays specifically. The small group of trainees who had joined together accepted the invitation to go to a clinic in Newcastle one afternoon, to get our chests x-rayed. Some days later however I was asked to visit a NCB doctor. He said there was a shadow on the x-ray, and referred me to my GP who referred me to a specialist clinic in Benwell, Newcastle. It turned out that I had tuberculosis, which must have been there for years undetected. I had to take three months off work, but could return after that amount of treatment, which continued for a year in total. Injections and tablets of antibiotics.

I stayed at the NCB for two years. Noticing the difference which having a degree made to prospects, I was determined to get mine. So I studied in the evening and weekends, retook my failed exams, and returned to Newcastle University to complete my BSc General Science, which I did in 1971. I was then 24, and knew I wanted to continue in computing, so rather than take another year for BSc Honours, I decided to do a conversion MSc in computing. A good friend from Rutherford, Michael Lawson, had done his MSc at Southampton University, and I'd visited him there. In addition, Southampton was one of only two universities that offered a broad based MSc, many others specialising in numerical analysis or whatever. So I went to Southampton University for 1971-72 to take MSc Computer Science, and really enjoyed it. I had a place at Glen Eyre Halls, with beech trees and squirrels in the grounds. It seemed idyllic to me. I wasn't offered a research council (ESRC) grant, so Mum and Dad paid. Good on them, it must have been a lot for them to find.

I'd just completed rebuilding my 1939 Morgan, and took that with me to Southampton. Great for turning heads, you don't see that sort of car on the roads these days, maybe only at owners' club rallies. I met a lovely girl called Heather Milburn, who came from Brighton and whose father was a director in some oil company or other. She went on to do medicine at London University. I didn't stay in touch. A year or so later, I bumped into her by chance at one of the open-air concerts they hold at Kenwood House in Hampstead, London, during Saturday evenings over six weeks in the summer. We'd been sitting on the grass as you do, only yards apart, and noticed each other as we left. Odd how some things happen. I was with an Australian colleague from ICL, who came from their Melbourne or Adelaide office, called Andy Wendelborn, and Heather also had some young female Aussie with her. The two

didn't say much to each other. Odd again. It would be good to know what later happened to Heather.

I got interested in information retrieval while at Southampton. My MSc project was to design and develop retrieval software that could be used by the engineering researchers to store their research papers. It used what are called 'inverted lists' using keywords. I had bought an introductory book called *Information Retrieval* by Roger Meetham of the National Physical Laboratory. The book enthused me that computers would one day make a great deal of difference to our lives, by making information much more readily, quickly and cheaply available. We had only very limited networks in those days. The Internet was later to show just how right I'd been that information would make a difference to ordinary folk. It was to transform the men's rights groups that I was later involved with, by allowing us all to know so much more about what was going on around the country and the world. More about distribution of knowledge through the Internet later.

An interesting episode illustrates the change in our abilities. While at NCB I was writing, compiling and testing an applications program, using batch data. On one occasion I needed to test the latest version of the program, but there was limited machine time in Gateshead. The computer operators, using the primitive network that existed, sent the source program to NCB Edinburgh, where it was compiled. The object program was then sent to NCB Doncaster together with test data, where it was tested. The results were returned to Gateshead for me to check. This took a few hours, a normal time for jobs to be processed on the then mainframe computers.

In those days, only about 25% of university students were women. I suppose they weren't encouraged by their parents, and didn't

expect to be breadwinners later in life. But maybe there were more women in the teachers training colleges that then existed. Obviously the ratio of men to women was about 3 to 1. As a consequence, it was difficult to find a girlfriend in the universities. It's quite different now of course, there are slightly more women than men.

I just can't remember when I first went horse-racing. It may have been in my early university days in Newcastle. Certainly a friend of mine, Tony whatsesname from Middlesbrough, was keen. We went to Newcastle, Hexham, Sedgfield and Kelso. At Newcastle he arranged a job for us selling *Timeform* cards. This earned us a little money, then we were allowed into the course after the first race. I didn't keep records in those days, but seemed to break even. It certainly was affordable. Tony was on the same or similar university course to myself, and I visited his home in Middlesbrough, and helped him repair a car he'd bought. He never put more than 2/6, about 12p in today's money, worth of petrol in it at a time. Later, I caught him kissing one of my girlfriends in the back of my car. Who needs enemies? I later had to work with him at the NCB, where he'd also obtained work, but that was the limit of our friendship.

## **Start of career**

Leaving Southampton, I wanted experience initially. I had no ties, and so simply went for good early experience. I was offered three jobs. The first was with Business Computers Ltd (BCL). I went for an interview to Brighton if I remember right, and was offered a job either in Edinburgh or Gateshead, whichever I preferred. In case you don't know, Gateshead is just over the Tyne from Newcastle.

But I decided to get experience in the South, as there was much more computing there at the time, so declined BCL's offer.

I'll come back to BCL later, since there's an interesting link to my later life.

I was secondly offered a job at General Electric Company (GEC) at Borehamwood, which I accepted, but immediately after I was also offered a third job at International Computers Limited (ICL) in Bracknell, Berkshire. This would be better experience I thought, so went there, where I helped develop the compiler software for a new series of mainframe machines. During my time there, they held a competition to name the new series. As the old series, that I'd programmed at the NCB and at Southampton, was called the 1900 series, some genius had suggested 2900. This was the name. I don't know who won the competition, we weren't told. I was programming a prototype machine, in assembly code. I detected that one of the machine code instructions wasn't working as it should, so had to tell the engineers. That seems impressive now, even to me.

The links with ICL went on for years. As well as being employed by the company for 2 years, a later employer, Vickers Management Services, used ICL kit, and my future wife was also to be employed by ICL in Newcastle. In Newcastle there were social events with colleagues of my wife. ICL had a training establishment called Beaumont House in Old Windsor, and provided courses for staff and clients. I was to visit Beaumont a number of times. There were courses I attended while employed by ICL, and later when employed by Vickers Management Services. And social weekends in later years to which I was invited. I recall the facilities : a swimming pool, a bar, a croquet lawn, and squash courts. At the

social weekends I played squash, representing some part of ICL I think. Good memories.

But to return to my time in Berkshire. I'd learned to appreciate real ale, which had never died out there, unlike the North of England. I joined the CAMpaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) and have been a member ever since. It's one of the most, if not the most, successful consumer rights organisation in this country. By the time I returned to Newcastle, most pubs had real ale again. And it has got better since then. Great news.

On one of my evenings out with a few friends, at a pub in the centre of Bracknell, I met a young woman called Judy Senior. She also worked in computing as a programmer, seemed of similar background, coming from Leeds and with parents comparable to mine. We went out to pubs and to the flicks.

After two years at ICL, I realised I couldn't afford any house or even a flat in that area, so I applied for, and got, a job at Plessey Radar in Stoke Poges, near Slough. This was in real-time defence systems for the British Army. My job title was Senior Analyst/Programmer. The location was fine. Stoke House, said to have been built by the judge who tried the gunpowder plotters. Plessey shared this with Stoke Poges golf club, so my office looked out over the course, and we were allowed to use the golf club bar, where they had upmarket sandwiches including smoked salmon. I'd got a better job, with further experience in the real-time area, and a more pleasant existence.

However, house prices were rocketing in the 1970s, and were keeping ahead of my salary. In addition, I didn't find the South East a welcoming area, and the quality of life was low. Plessey had asked me to join a project developing computer-controlled radar-

jamming equipment for the Egyptian army at their Addlestone site. It took me an hour to drive home one Friday evening. I'd had enough.

So I decided to head back north. I still knew a few people in Newcastle, liked the area, especially Northumberland, which I'd missed in terms of walking and fishing. Vickers Management Services offered me a job as Senior Programmer.

Still seeing Judy, and thinking then that I wanted to stay with her, I told her I'd had enough of the South East. Which I had. I asked her to help choose a house in Newcastle. She did, and judging that she could cope with Newcastle, I asked her to marry me. As we usually say on reflection about such occasions, it seemed like a good idea at the time. I could afford a small semi-detached bungalow on Chapel House Estate, and that was my first house.

The Vickers Engineering Group had set up this Management Services in a purpose-built building on Scotswood Road, with an American director called Phil Fellows, who had proved himself at British Overseas Aircraft Corporation (BOAC) in their early computer reservation systems. It was an exciting time, as the Vickers board had decided to launch a programme to introduce computer-based systems into the companies within the Group. I was promoted by my boss, the Programming Manager Jim Golightly, to Team Leader in the first year.

I worked on a few projects, one of which was a Material Requirements Planning system at Hydraulics Division in Swindon. On one visit to Swindon with other members of the team, we were to get a lift back to Newcastle with one of the directors in the company plane. There was a small air-strip at Swindon, where I think Spitfires, or some similar WWII planes, were built and tested.



After take-off, the plane circled the air-strip, to allow someone on the ground to inspect the under-carriage. It wasn't retracting apparently. So we landed, and an air taxi was summoned from Bristol Airport. As there were fewer seats in this plane, I was given one next to the pilot. It was fascinating to watch him. Everything he did seemed to be about safety, including timing the engine with a stop-watch, and taking a route to Newcastle via small airfields, I assume in case we needed to put down. This experience changed the way I thought about driving, to consider safe practices.

After two years at Vickers, it was obvious that the business was to be ended by the Vickers board. I'd always admired the academic life. I applied for a lecturing post at Sunderland Polytechnic, and had an interview. They seemed to want someone with accounting systems experience. I didn't have this, and they didn't offer the job. That was useful, as soon after, Newcastle Polytechnic advertised. I applied, they were pleased with my industrial experience, and offered a job as Lecturer. In the first year I was promoted to Senior Lecturer. As I didn't like travelling, and much preferred Newcastle, this was a much finer outcome.

While at Vickers, I had applied to the British Computer Society (BCS) for membership, based on my experience and my recent MSc. Membership was given. When the BCS later affiliated in some way to the Engineering Council, and so all BCS members could credit themselves with Chartered Engineer (CEng) status, I became a CEng. Later again I think we obtained the credit of Chartered Information Systems Engineer. So I had 'BSc MSc MBCS CISE CEng' after my name, and felt like a real professional.

## Other youth activities

My interests have been varied I guess. Mainly related to engineering, technology or science topics. Not exclusively, as there is some art involved also.

At 11 years old, my parents had bought me a 1.5" refractor telescope. Having enjoyed seeing the night sky objects available with that, Dad soon after bought a kit and assembled a 4" reflector. It was well constructed, and although the mirror now needs resurfacing, 40 years later it still works. I've been interested in astronomy since.

Hovercraft seemed like a good idea when they first appeared in the 1960s. Seeing kits available for one-man machines, I decided to build one myself. Using a neighbour's garage, which I had to wire up with power from my parent's house, I set to. A lift fan was bought, and a duct made by a local aluminium fabricator company in Hexham. A wooden frame was made, to be covered with plastic sheeting. Even an office plastic seat was to be bolted onto the frame. And a second-hand motorbike engine was going to provide lift power. I'd sort out the propulsion later I thought.

Unfortunately for the hovercraft, at 18 years old, I could then drive a car. My friends and myself encouraged each other's interests in stylish old cars, such as MG T-series machines, Morgans, and similar. One bought a Swallow Sports car of the 1930s, which had style, as these were the forerunners of Jaguars. It was possible to buy a car for £50 in those days. There were no MOTs and initially no regulations about depth of tread on tyres. Not even seat belts were needed.

I bought a 1939 Morgan 4/4. It needed rebuilding. So the hovercraft was dropped to rebuild the Morgan that seemed more important. This took a year or two, and I drove it for three years, including my year at Southampton. It didn't have the correct engine, as someone had fitted a Ford engine in it. I bought the correct engine via *Exchange and Mart* magazine, from someone in the South. They offered to have it delivered, as they knew someone who drove a lorry north regularly. I came home one day to find a tea-chest on the drive, with the engine, in bits, inside. As I had Morgan's manual, this didn't bother me, and anyway, I would recondition the engine before fitting it, so it didn't matter that it was in bits. Except that I hadn't seen a complete one. After fitting the reconditioned engine, it started almost immediately. Success.

My interests in fishing had continued through my teens. As well as the fly tackle, I later had spinning and bait fishing kit, but was still interested mainly in trout. Salmon and sea-trout were out of reach to a young man, unless you knew the river owner.

I think the interest was based on fishing being an interesting skill in itself and a challenge. To find the fish and to see if they could be persuaded to take a fly. Rivers are more interesting as they have rapids and slower running parts, steady currents in 'pools' where fish may lie waiting for food to pass by. There is a skill in knowing where to place the fly, and in casting to that spot, so that the fly floats past any fish. And deciding whether to fish up or down the pool, so as to disturb the fish least.

I was later, in my 30s, to have the thrill of fishing Loch Maree for sea-trout, from the hotel of that same name. Using the 'dap', a special type of dry fly which is 'dapped' on the surface. A long rod, usually about 18 feet, is used with a line of 'floss' which carries the fly away from the boat in the wind. At the hotel I once met Hugh

Falkus, the author of a well-known book on sea-trout fishing. He was there for the week, with one of his lady friends, and they went under assumed names for some reason, but all the anglers knew him. Other guests went there for the same week each year, and some were interesting in themselves. Hamish Falconer and Bertie Loudon had flown Spitfires in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. Hamish was a member of the Red Caterpillar Club, and showed off his badge in the evenings at dinner and in the bar. You get to be a member if you've bailed out of a burning aircraft I think. Hamish's Spitfire had gone down over the Channel on fire, but he got out. He'd been in a prisoner of war camp, and had been around at one of the escapes. I suggested he write a book about his experiences, but he said it had been done.

Hamish was the most eloquent person I'd ever met. One evening in the bar he told the story of his wife dying, and it had everyone listening intently. On another evening in the resident's bar Hamish was chatting to some guest who happened to have an umbrella with him. This other guest stumbled, grabbed at Hamish to steady himself, but both ended up in a pile on the floor with the umbrella sticking up. Miss Moodie, who managed the hotel, tended the bar some evenings, heard the commotion and came through from the gillies' bar, saw the two of them on the floor and said something like "I'll just be closing up the bar now then", and down came the shutters.

In the resident's bar was one of those bells on the counter with which to summon the bar staff. The type, usually brass, with a flat topped pin in the centre which is tapped to make the bell ring. The pin had fallen out and was missing years ago. Hamish had replaced it with a nail of similar size and length, which worked equally well. He always mentioned this, as his replacement piece had been there for many years it seems.

I had bought a second-hand copy of WA Adamson's book *Lake and Loch Fishing* [13] at Robinson's bookshop in Newcastle's Grainger Market. The book introduced me to Loch Maree, and I booked a week about 1985 after doing a lot of consultancy work that summer. The Loch Maree Hotel was then managed by Miss Moodie and her sister Jenny McLeod. Jenny had married while Miss Moodie hadn't. It wasn't difficult to see why this happened. Jenny had joined Miss Moodie at the hotel after the death of her husband. I shared a boat during the same week each year with an acquaintance, Derek Smith, until about 1988 or 1989 when Miss Moodie, who had Parkinson's, retired with her sister to a house at Bonar Bridge. The fishing declined rapidly after that for other reasons usually put down to the effects of fish farming in the sea lochs around the coast. Derek and myself went to fish from Scourie and Altnahara hotels after that. I heard, while on holiday on the Isle of Mull in 2003 that Miss Moodie had since died. I'll remember her and the hotel, and Loch Maree.

Another episode from my youth related to fishing is worth recalling. Grandad was in support. He had as housekeeper, a distant aunt called Maisie. Aunt Maisie had at one time worked as a chamber-maid in hotels in Northumberland. At the George Hotel at Chollerford she had worked with Georgina Ford. Georgina later became housekeeper at Fenton House, just north of Wooler. Georgina and Maisie were still in touch. Fenton House is part of an estate owned by the Lambton family, and this included water on the River Till, a tributary of the Tweed. It flows north through Northumberland, yet, as a tributary of Tweed, comes under Tweed regulations. It has salmon, sea-trout and brown trout, and some coarse fish including pike, perch, roach and grayling.

Georgina Ford invited Aunt Maisie, Granddad and myself to stay in a cottage she had in the stable block at Fenton House, and it was arranged through the agent that I could fish the Till. This was a terrific holiday for a 14 year old. We went back the following year or two. I caught my first sea-trout, unusually with a maggot floated down a fairly fast moving pool. It was 1 lb. 11 oz.

Georgina couldn't have been kinder. As well as letting us have the use of her cottage, we could use the billiard room in the House. And we were once shown around the House, seeing the library and Lord Lambton's robes. One or two famous paintings were there, including the Blue Boy. And there was also the Red Boy. Both by someone whose name I've forgotten, but you may have heard of him. The House has a tower, with a large brass telescope on a tripod in the top room. The views over the Cheviots were fine. No one seemed to clean the tower, or even go up there, as the floor was covered with dead bluebottles. But we still tried out the telescope.

One day a visitor arrived in a car. It was Lucinda Lambton. She called into our cottage and said hello. I just remember how well groomed she seemed to me, a mere commoner. I suppose she probably would have been. She was 17 years old and keen to tell us that she'd just come up from London on the train, and had had breakfast with the Everly Brothers. Her car, a green Austin A40 if I remember right, needed a bump-start, which we helped with. This was my first and only meeting with a member of the aristocracy, if that's what she is.

There's not really much else to tell about my youth.

## Settling back in Newcastle and marriage

During my first year at Vickers Management Services, Judy was still living in Wokingham, Berkshire. We each travelled by train every other weekend to see each other. We got married after I'd been back in Newcastle for a year, and soon after she had obtained a job in Newcastle with ICL, my old employer from Bracknell days. The date was 30 December 1976, when I was 29 years old, she 24. It was at a church near her parent's home, St Paul's, Drighlington near Morley not far from Leeds in Yorkshire. The vicar had us in beforehand. He reminded that we were getting into something, and that some things are worth remembering, and we should trust each other or some such advice. I think he mentioned that money could cause friction, and we should avoid that, but it's a long time ago now. What I do remember clearly is that he told us nothing about the terms we would be accepting by entering the married state, even though he was about to be the agent of marriage in his own church.

At the ceremony, Judy was ill. Unknown to me, she'd been to see a doctor for the nerves she expected at the ceremony. He had given her some tablets. And her folks had given her a brandy before setting off. The combination wasn't good. It was awful, and I was glad when we were back in Newcastle. That evening, being hungry, I'd cooked myself spaghetti bolognese, and opened a bottle of home-made wine. The relief caused tears. Perhaps the incident was a signal for the future, but at the time, back in Newcastle I soon forgot about it.

Judy wanted children. Soon after marriage she raised the issue of when would we start a family. I suggested we wait five years until we were established financially and had a suitable home. She accepted this. Looking back now, I think that was a very sensible

approach to this big step. I later found out that others, especially women, don't necessarily think about these things, but just get on with it, as whatever happens, the welfare state or other people, particularly the father, will always provide.

We moved to a larger dormer-windowed semi on Brunton Park Estate in 1981. It had a double-length garage, three bedrooms. It seemed much better than before, didn't need much doing to it, although I put extra insulation in the loft. I'd made one or two items of furniture in the previous house, but this gave me more scope.

I'd been at Newcastle Polytechnic a few years when Claire was born in 1982. Ross was born in 1985. At first I was neutral about children, but once they arrived of course I came to enjoy looking after them. Immediately Claire was born, Judy invited her mother to our house for a week to help look after the new baby. I don't remember being asked what I thought. During that week, and in those days men didn't get paternity leave, so I was at the Polytechnic earning most of the family income, I was hardly considered, and felt that if I came into a room with the baby, that I was intruding. But having them around was mainly enjoyable. While they were young I usually took them to the supermarket, sitting one in the trolley as you do. One day some acquaintance from the school gate, another local mother, said that she'd never take two children shopping, it was far too stressful. But I usually did this.

I recall taking Claire for a trip in the car one day while Judy was working. We went to Rothbury in Northumberland, and had a snack lunch in the car. When Judy realised I'd done this, she reacted, as if she felt missed out, and had to take Claire somewhere herself the next weekend.



Judy went part-time after Claire arrived. She also obtained work from home for some time, for a consultancy linked with ICL and staffed mainly by women in the same situation. So we had a computer in the dining room, which was later to be useful. Her salary, previously already lower than mine, was then about one third of mine. We employed child-minders when Judy was at work.

## **Developing interests**

I had ambitions, but not necessarily within my career as an academic. I wanted a good home for myself and the family. I'd shown myself some abilities at DIY.

Interested in classical music, which I'd discovered in my Bracknell days, I had a vinyl collection. It started when I went into Boots in Bracknell and browsed one of those revolving display stands. I found a LP of Shostakovitch's 12<sup>th</sup> Symphony, subtitled 'The Year 1917'. I thought "how could a symphony be about 'The Year 1917'?". It was in the EMI Classics for Pleasure series and cost 79p. This big spend changed my life. The music was electrifying. Years later, back in Newcastle, a friend, Peter Mortimer, was interested in hi-fi, and had built his own speakers. I built similar models. Buying second-hand Quad kit, I was set up with decent hi-fi. I now have a collection of classical music.

I had read about a Danish academic who had designed and built his own furniture. That seemed a fine thing to do, especially as there was so much rubbish available in the shops. In particular, I'd noticed that veneered chipboard seemed more expensive than solid hardwood. I didn't earn enough to buy from the specialist cabinet makers such as the 'mouse man' near Thirsk. I'd visited the

furniture factory called Treske, also in Thirsk, which specialises in ash wood pieces. Nice stuff, and affordable, but how much better and satisfying to design it myself. My first project was a bed and side tables out of iroco, an African timber reminiscent of teak, but rather brittle to work. Later there was a coffee table out of Brazilian mahogany, and a hi-fi cabinet of iroco. I then got interested in home-grown timbers, and visiting timber yards was a thrill. So there were book-cases in cherry, which grows wild, the cultivated orchard trees not being used by timber yards. A sideboard in sycamore, beds for the children in wild service wood, a drinks cabinet in walnut, and a dining table in cherry.

To buy fresh sawn timber, cut to your own requirements, see it dry, then get it planed is a thrill, and the finished piece something to be proud of. Fresh sawn timber is still wet and needs to be dried or seasoned. In drying, which takes anything from 1 year to 3, it changes to a lighter colour. It can then be planed to the thickness needed for the piece being built. After planing the grain and colours may be seen to best effect. When the piece is finished, especially with an oil finish, the finish again darkens the colour and accentuates the grain. It's a thrill to select a board of timber for part of the piece you're making, and to cut out the piece for the best colour and grain. Boards are selected for their role, and the more visible parts of the piece need the most careful selection and finishing.

If you're looking for inspiration, I can recommend the books by James Krenov, which I'd bought in the 1970s or 1980s. They may no longer be in print, but maybe available in libraries.

And I discovered and was enthusiastic about oiled finishes. These are usually sold as teak oil or Danish oil or one of a few alternatives. Essentially they soak into the surface of a timber,

protect it from water-based damage such as coffee spills and general soiling, and give a lustre and bring out in depth the colour of the wood. I've ever since disliked, and rejected if possible, surface finishes such as varnish, as they always crack and flake off, spoiling the piece. And the principle is extended to any surface finish on wood, metal, walls, and so on, on anything in our lives which looks tatty after use because the surface layer applied at manufacture has broken and come off in patches.

## **Consultancy work**

The possibility of making more from my computing expertise was apparent. I didn't really want to move around getting other jobs. Software products were a possible approach. My manager at Vickers, Jim Golightly, had asked a few staff to join him in setting up a software consultancy. He had ambitions. I was asked to join, but, nervous about the mortgage and risks involved, didn't. Three others did. Alan Heslop, Kit Morpeth, and Judy Berry. Kit and Judy left soon after, but Alan stuck it out. Alan went to consultancy jobs, while Jim developed sales and service. BBC micros were upcoming at that time, during the 1980s. And so were networks for schools and other bodies.

Jim had acquaintances who had set up on their own. They were Brian Hobson and Frank Crossley, and who called themselves HCCS for Hobson and Crossley Computer Systems. They had an office near Low Fell High Street in Gateshead, and a back room was available for Jim & co., who now called themselves HCCS Associates.

An interesting link with my history was that Brian and Frank had been employed by Business Computers Ltd (BCL). A year after I

had been offered a job with BCL on leaving Southampton in 1972, the business had folded. Brian and Frank contacted their clients, asked them if they'd like continued support. Enough said 'yes' to allow Brian and Frank to set up their own consultancy. This developed, until by the 1980s, they had fifteen staff and an office on Team Valley Trading Estate. I knew them as acquaintances of Jim and Alan. By some series of amazing events, Frank ran off with Brian's wife. The business had money problems. This led quickly to it folding.

If I'd accepted the job with BCL in 1972, who knows what events would have unfolded, and what the effect on my life. We'll never know.

Interestingly, when my wife left years later, I took advice from Brian. I was given plenty of booze, then a bed for the night at his home in Ryton. Great guy Brian.

But to get back to the story of making a few bob from my computing expertise. I had some expertise in information retrieval. This allowed me to develop software which we thought had many applications, such as registers of items for sale, retrieved using keywords. Then, for the BBC Micro, there was the possibility of a simple authoring tool. And I wrote a user manual for a programming language. And what was quite a useful tool, an addition to BASIC for the BBC Micro that allowed timed and concurrent processing. Using interpretive BASIC, it was slow, but fast enough for many applications. It was titled Multi-BASIC. We sold six copies at a sales fair in Manchester. All of this work made me five or six thousand pounds over about three years, so the rate of pay was very poor.

## **Youthful optimism and enthusiasm**

When you've had some success at education and early career, it's easy to be optimistic and enthusiastic. Getting into mortgages, moving house, taking on house renovation, changing jobs, and so on, seem like good ideas.

When you're older, or when the effort isn't rewarded, or rewards have been negated by other events, the effort appears a waste. It wasn't until much later that I would look back at my early efforts to improve my life, and assess them for their true worth. And other people's interference was yet to be felt. But for the moment I remained both optimistic and enthusiastic.

### **A better home**

I got restless for a better home. I'd love to have moved up the Tyne valley to Corbridge or Hexham, but with children at school, a compromise of a better house in Newcastle seemed more realistic. We looked at one or two places that had potential. One on Polwarth Road on the same Brunton Park Estate had potential.

It was a two-bedroom detached dormer bungalow. It needed renovation, modernising of plumbing and electricals, and extending for which there was plenty of space. So in 1986 we bought it for £39,000. We had enough in savings to pay for the changes, and I planned to do a lot of work myself. We engaged a local builder to do the extension, and I did a lot of the interior work, except for plastering which is a skill learned by practice. The renovation took three years, from 1986 when I was 39, to 1989 when I was 42, during which I worked most weekends and most of my academic holidays.

I'd handled the legal conveyancing work myself on the previous house move, that is both the sale and purchase transactions, so I did the sale at this move. Solicitors seem to have reduced their costs more recently, so there isn't the motivation now for this type of do-it-yourself.

So I've been fairly enthusiastic about making and doing things myself. It allows a person to have things the way you want, not how others think you want them.

## **Married life**

Married life was, from my point of view, very happy. I had a purpose in life. My career was stable and going, not brilliantly, but satisfactorily. The private life was good. I was happily married, two children, pleased that my first was a girl, and was looking forward to my son maybe following me in interests such as fishing or whatever he wanted. I had a fine home. This was better than I could imagine after my days in Berkshire. I had designed and made about half my own furniture, which had acceptance from family and friends and was admired. I had friends for regular pubbing, and other occasional events such as restaurants and theatres.

My interest in classical music had been encouraged by John Woodward, one of those with whom I'd shared the flat in Bracknell. He played the piano, and was to be the best man at my wedding. John owned a baby grand, bought second hand, which had apparently once belonged to Edward Heath, the politician. By the married days in Newcastle, I had a collection of some three hundred vinyls. I'd also always loved books, and couldn't resist

second hand bookshops. The result was a collection of about four hundred books. Having bought a copy of Eric Linklater's *The Prince in the Heather* in a bookshop in Portree, Skye, I wanted to know how Prince Charles Edward came to be in this predicament. So my interest in history included the 1745 rebellion. I eventually owned a copy, all three volumes, of Rev. Robert Forbes's *The Lyon in Mourning*, the 1975 facsimile of the 1895 edition from Scottish Academic Press. Ripping stuff if you know the story. Another rebel, Michael Collins, attracted my attention after the 1990's film. So I looked for books on this period of Irish history, another ripping yarn, and a small collection was bought. Including Tim Pat Coogan's biography of Collins, which I found second-hand, along with the same author's book on Eamon de Valera. They were both in the bookshop in the old station in Alnwick.

Married life continued for 13 years, 1977 until 1990. At times Judy wasn't as enthusiastic about the house we renovated on Brunton Park. She had been a little reluctant about the house, but agreed later. We had some small tiffs about other issues. I assumed that as I'd forgotten them, so had she. Perhaps the biggest difference was over private schooling for the children. I realised that our financial position wasn't strong. We basically couldn't afford this and anyway it was unethical in my altruistic and naïve outlook. Again I didn't think this was a significant issue. Perhaps I'd had too much of my own way over too many things and this was the last straw.

We had a bit of a tiff one day in January 1990. We went out for an Indian meal with her colleagues, I can't remember what the occasion was. I usually did the shopping at the Presto supermarket then in Gosforth. On Saturday morning 4 February 1990 she went to the supermarket, and bought things such as yoghurt which the children liked. When she came back, we had a few words, I can't remember what about.

She put the children back in the car and drove off. Later, that evening I had a call from her. She was at her parents' house in Leeds. She said she'd return on the Sunday. This wasn't so unusual, as she liked going to her parents. In fact she referred to it as 'going home'. However on the Sunday she didn't turn up. I phoned her parents. They said she wasn't there, and they didn't know where she was. Later she phoned. It was from her sister's in Bristol. She was hysterical, and spoke in the most vicious and antagonistic tone, with a hissing in her voice, that I've ever heard from a person. She said exactly these words : "I'm going to see a solicitor in the morning, go and get yourself one !".

I only ever saw her again across a court-room a few times, and once exchanging the children at a motorway service station. There was never any communication, except basic information about the children visiting me.

There are a number of things I could describe about the following two months. But the detail isn't important. Lack of sleep, consultations with the doctor. Seeing friends and family for advice. Things I don't want to remember now.

The events had come 'out of the blue' as they say. In fact her father, in one of the few phone calls, had used this very expression himself. It didn't prevent him from giving her total support. I was in the wrong, even though he had never at any point heard anything from myself. Both her parents moved to Bristol soon after, as her father also said "to give her a hand". And other relatives of hers helped with furniture to let her get established in another home.



I was to be on some tranquillisers for a few weeks, until I realised they weren't compatible with a pint. Then on beta-blockers for about two years, as it took a while to re-align my thinking.

The only support from society was to be from my parents, my sister and her husband, a few personal friends, and supportive colleagues at the university department. I was allowed some days off on compassionate grounds to attend court hearings. But after about 3 hearings, my Head of Department, Rod Burgess, stopped this. So I had to take holiday time off, and ask my colleagues to exchange classes with me, which is usual in academic jobs when special time off is needed in term time.

So far as our country's services were concerned, the doctor was alone in providing support, but only by way of treating the symptoms.

The story of the legal system is another which I'll leave until later in this book, as it deserves a lot more space. And special attention.

## **Part 2 : the revolution by stealth : 1947 - 2000**

*..., a revolution so quiet and yet so total, ...*

Edward Heath 1916 - ,  
British Conservative Prime Minister

From speech at Conservative Party Conference,  
October 1970

The government of a country, which claims to be a democracy, is based on the simple principle that the people have representatives in Parliament. If there is public concern, individuals may write to, or visit, their representative and explain their concern. If there is sufficient concern, the representatives organise some change in the law or social provisions or whatever. If the change doesn't work, or people find themselves dissatisfied with the outcome, they may go back to their representatives and get the problem sorted out.

In order to understand the remainder of this story, we need to appreciate how policies and laws have been made recently. I want to document, in simple terms, what has happened in this country in terms of the laws relating to marriage.

## **Developments without public consent or knowledge**

Before and during the 1800s, a marriage could only be ended by Parliament. It must have been taken very seriously, and there must have been few divorces, since Parliament wouldn't have the time to handle many each year. In fact they handled only a few. In 1857 the process of divorce came under the control of judges. In 1868 the judges defined marriage as "a voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others". The law reference is 'per Lord Penzance in *Hyde v. Hyde* (1868) *Law Reports 1 Probate and Divorce* 130, 133'. It isn't clear what this phrase actually means, or how courts should behave with regard to it.

Let's move forward to 1947 when I was born. As I've said, I'd been part of the baby-boom which occurred soon after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War had ended.

One year later, in 1948, I was 1 year old. At this time a Mr Allen was appealing his case in the Court of Appeal. As you might imagine, this was entirely unknown to me, as I wasn't aware of a wider world at this age.

Mr Allen had fought, and been made a prisoner of war. When he got home, he found his wife and their daughter living with another man. I imagine he was shocked and outraged that a hero of the war effort, even of the British Empire, could be treated in so disrespectful a manner. But there was much worse to come. Not from the enemy, but from his own people.

In the lower court, his wife was given custody of the daughter, despite her desertion of him and her adultery. A 'no-fault' principle had been applied to the decision over his child in the

divorce case. When he appealed, senior judges Wrottesley and Everard LJJ had upheld the lower court's decision.

This case precedent in the Court of Appeal was allowed to stand. The judges had changed the law, in a very significant way. They had done so of their own accord, without our MPs or Government ministers being involved. The people had not been consulted either. They had not even been informed of this, as the press and media that then existed, did not report this fundamental change. The people whose lives would be affected knew nothing.

Previously a fault-based law had been applied. So those then married had the principles they expected to be applied, fundamentally changed. And those later to be married were not informed of this change, and so did not actually know the principles they would be accepting at marriage.

Let's move forward 25 years, to 1973. I was then 26 years old, been through school and universities, and employed by ICL Bracknell as a programmer, sharing a flat with three others, all as it happened, in computing. The flat was above some shops on an estate called Great Hollands in Bracknell. Its nickname was Grim Hollands, and this was fairly accurate. The property boom of the 1970s prevented the possibility of most young graduates buying a house or even a flat, at least in the South East.

In 1973, a change in written law was introduced via the Matrimonial Causes Act (MCA73). This brought in changes to the grounds for divorce. The ground of 'separation' was introduced, and 'unreasonable behaviour' replaced 'cruelty'.

Let's stay in 1973. Again, as in 1948, someone was appealing their case. This time it was a Mr Wachtel. Again as you might imagine,

this was unknown to me, as I was too busy getting on with making my way in my early career, maintaining my car, and so on as you do, and just living. But unlike 1948, I was aware of a wider world. For example, I read the papers and watched television news. The case may have been reported in the law report columns of the serious papers, but I wasn't in the habit of reading these columns. It certainly wasn't on the front page headlines, where it should have been.

At this time, I didn't read the law reports because I didn't see any need. After all, I'd been told, and believed, that this country had a fine legal system, maybe the best in the world. My education at Rutherford Grammar School hadn't included law specifically, but I'd learned about some aspects of law. I knew we had written laws, and that was important for everyone to know and understand the law. And I understood that this also meant that everyone could see that the law was being followed by the courts. I believed that the judges came from good backgrounds, so could be respected. So we had written laws and fine judges, didn't we ? And we had a democracy, in which the public could write to their MP and get changes if anything went wrong. So I thought then. It was therefore unimaginable to me that corruption on a significant scale could exist. So at that time I had no indication of the situation.

In the lower court Mr Wachtel had been stripped of assets, in an unjust way, in his divorce case, by a judge called Ormrod. So he rightly appealed. In the Court of Appeal was that well known judge, then Master of the Rolls, the most senior civil judge, Denning. He and the other judges, Phillimore and Roskill, decided that a 'no-fault' principle should apply to asset distribution, unless the fault was what they called 'gross and obvious'.

This was the completion of building the ‘no-fault’ divorce principle into law. Or at least into case law, as the people had never agreed it, and Parliament had never passed it.

Case law now determined that ‘unreasonable behaviour’, originally intended to be based on objective grounds by a court, is redefined as based on subjective grounds, to mean anything that someone making the allegations thought was ‘unreasonable’. Most divorces are subsequently based on trivial and fabricated ‘unreasonable behaviour’ grounds.

Soon after, the qualification ‘gross and obvious’ was dropped. And in 1976 the ‘special procedure’ was introduced to speed up the majority of divorces which were by then uncontested. They were uncontested as the major decisions, about children and assets, were based on the ‘no-fault’ principle.

The resulting situation was not reported at all in the press or media, so the majority of people, just like myself, were not aware of it. This in itself raises the issue of what our press and media people are actually there for, and what their role is.

So by 1976, the fundamental principles of the rights and responsibilities endowed by marriage had been dramatically changed, without the public being consulted, or even being aware. Without those currently married, or those about to be married, being aware. Without the families and friends of these people being aware. No one was aware except the judges practising this, and the lawyers who acquiesced to it because they were making money from the process. Nor were the vicars of the Church of England, or ministers of any other denomination, who were in the habit of marrying couples, made aware. The terms of marriage had

been changed by stealth, and kept from the people whose lives would be affected.

The divorce rate, low throughout the first half of the 1900s, started to climb through the 1960s onward, until it was 4 times what it had been earlier in the century.

We need to try to understand why this rate of divorce has occurred. So let's continue our study of what has happened, by looking at other aspects.

## **Fanatics at large**

Most folk have heard of feminism, and have some notion of its aims. It's about liberating women from their oppression isn't it? Most folk however have little or no notion of how far the feminist aims, and successes, have gone. Or of the feminist supporters.

In 1979 I obtained my post as lecturer at what was then Newcastle Polytechnic, later Northumbria University. In that same year the *Gay Liberation Front Manifesto* was published. It is reported in *The Fight for the Family : the adults behind children's rights*, by Lynette Burrows [5]. It included this item of policy :

We, along with the women's movement, must fight for something more than reform. We must aim at the abolition of the family so that the sexist, male supremacist system can no longer be nurtured there. The oppression of gay people starts in the most basic unit of society, the family, consisting of the man in charge, a slave as his wife, and their children on whom they force themselves as the ideal models ... The end of the sexist

culture and of the family will benefit all women and gay people.

Again at the time, I knew nothing of this publication, nor of the people behind it, their motives and objectives. But they were talking about me? They were attempting to interfere in my rights? In my rights in the family? They were out to ensure that there would be “the end of ... the family”? They meant my family?

You could say that I was blissfully ignorant of all these developments at this time. But the word ‘blissful’ seems inappropriate here, as I hadn’t benefited or suffered from them. I was certainly ignorant of the serious attacks being made against the civil rights of men such as myself, and of the people behind these attacks.

I would later find out just how successful these people were to be with their objectives. There must have been many other feminist activities going on, of which I was never to be aware. Maybe someone will write the book one day.

### **Further developments without public consent or knowledge**

By 1984 I had been lecturing for five years. My daughter had been born in 1982, so was only 2 years old at this time. The Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act (MFPA84) was passed. This stated that a court was expected to examine behaviour of parties when allocating assets, i.e. a ‘fault-based’ process. However, the judges continued to ignore this requirement. I wasn’t aware of this either.



Another 5 years on, in 1989, the Children Act (CA89) was passed. The terms ‘custody and access’ were renamed ‘residence and contact’, but more significantly Parliament had decided that ‘shared residence’ should be normal after separation. And something called the ‘welfare checklist’ about children’s welfare was to be used to decide contested cases over children. As I would later learn, shared residence was largely ignored by judges, and the welfare checklist was largely ignored by court welfare officers, who continue to provide biased reports to the courts. They ignored any objectively defined aspects of welfare, and by 1996 also had their own written and published policy to ignore men’s rights. More about the *NAPO Anti-sexism Policy* later.

When laws are passed, they are often scheduled to come into effect a couple of years later. CA89 was to come into effect in 1991, only 1 year into my case, so it was to have an influence in the case, but not what I thought. Again, more on this later.

Once again I knew nothing of this development in law. We had taken on the dormer bungalow on Brunton Park in 1986, and I was getting on with the work to extend and renovate this, so that the family had a fine home. Most work was finished by 1989.

## **The beginning of knowledge**

We now reach 1990, when my then wife left without warning. Unfortunately for myself, not only was her leaving without warning, so had been the changes to matrimonial and family law which I’ve described. I was soon to find out about them however. The hard way.

But I'll continue with this history of the development of law, so that you have a complete picture.

## **Developments without public consent, but with at least some of my own knowledge**

Soon after my wife leaving, in 1991 the Child Support Act (CSA91) redefined child maintenance responsibilities. They were to be based solely on someone, usually the father, being a natural parent. Matrimonial status and any fault in divorce were to be entirely irrelevant.

The offensive term 'absent parent', used in the written law, was soon corrupted to 'absent father'. An even more offensive term, as most fathers, after separation and divorce, are deliberately excluded by the mother, who is actively assisted by the courts. Further, maintenance is not to be based on need, so that a wealthy woman will obtain the same level of maintenance as a poor woman. And there are to be no mechanisms available within the Act to ensure that money paid for child maintenance is actually spent on the children.

In 1994 the Marriage Act (MA94) was passed almost without notice by anyone, including men such as myself who were becoming aware of developments. The Act essentially allows a marriage ceremony to take place in locations other than church or register office. This in my opinion trivialises the act of marriage. The Act relates only to the ceremony, and not the terms of marriage, so is misnamed. If only those taking the option of a different ceremony in a hotel, or on a beach, realised the extent to which the law itself had undermined the institution of marriage. As with other developments, this change in law does not appear to have been

driven by public demand. I'm not aware of anyone who has requested of their MP that the law be changed in this area. So why has the Law Commission done this ? Who is behind this development and what are their motives ?

A much more significant event, of fundamental importance, took place in 1996. This was the passing by Parliament of the Family Law Act (FLA96). This was an attempt by certain factions to build the principle of 'no-fault' divorce, already introduced by stealth, into statute. By this time, the men's groups were becoming aware of developments, and who was behind them. So we understood this development, only too well.

The attempt to do this was led by the Law Commission, which included a feminist, Brenda Hoggett. Previously an academic in law at Manchester University, she later became a member of the Law Commission, an unaccountable and unelected body which proposes and develops new laws, and was later appointed a senior judge in the Court of Appeal in the family division, later in the House of Lords, and titled Mrs Justice Hale. In an influential paper published in 1980 [from *Ends and Means : the utility of Marriage as a Legal Institution*, Brenda Hoggett in Eekalaar and Catz (eds), *Marriage and Cohabitation in Contemporary Societies*, p.101, Butterworth, 1980] she wrote :

mother. The legal system has clearly abandoned one set of moral principles in favor of a pair of social goals which have proved incompatible. Family law no longer makes any attempt to buttress the stability of marriage or any other union. It has adopted principles for the protection of children and dependent spouses which could be made equally applicable to the unmarried. In such circum-

stances, the piecemeal erosion of the distinction between marriage and non-marital cohabitation may be expected to continue.

Logically, we have already reached a point at which, rather than discussing which remedies should now be extended to the unmarried, we should be considering whether the legal institution of marriage continues to serve any useful purposes.

#### Notes

1. Mair, L. *Marriage*. Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1971, ch. 1.

he *might* have habeas corpus, but was denied it in the reported cases, either because he had agreed to

The word ‘marriage’ is simply a term used to sum up the combination of social conventions and laws governing men and women living together and having children etc. The legal aspects in fact deal with what happens when separation occurs. They don’t deal with the behaviour of married people. There will always, unless we move to complete anarchy, be laws to govern this area when a separation occurs.

To question, as she does, whether “marriage continues to serve any useful purposes” is tantamount to saying that laws in this area serve “no useful purposes”. From this point of view, what she is saying appears to be fundamental nonsense and meaningless blather, as there will always be some laws. But such meaningless blather can confuse the unwary.

All this illustrates the attitude of a woman who, while in the Law Commission, attempted to build the ‘no-fault’ principle into written law in the Family Law Act 1996, and who has held, and still holds at the time of writing, major influence as a senior judge in the Family Division.

As we will see later, this development by the Law Commission attracted significant attention. Also as we will see later, others were able to counter it.

Anecdotal evidence about Hale's attitude, her agenda, her beliefs, and what she is prepared to do to men in court cases is given in the following story. One of the original Cheltenham Group members, Mark Thomas, was obliged to apply for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeal (CoA). One of the two judges at the hearing was Mrs Justice Hale who was temporarily acting in the CoA. Mark's ex-wife had previously obtained a clean break, obtaining all of the equity in the home. She had returned to court two years later asking for a 40% rise in maintenance for the children. The County Court Judge granted her this request, and so Mark applied to the Court of Appeal to have this unjust judgement reversed. Mrs Justice Hale told Mark that he could not have a clean break from his children. Mark had been forcibly separated from his children, and did not want any 'break' from them in any way whatever. It is considered that Mrs Justice Hale's statements in court are as offensive as they possibly could be in the circumstances, and demonstrate her real beliefs and motivation in family law issues.

Another anti-men event took place in 1996. This was the publication of what is called the *NAPO Anti-sexism Policy*. NAPO is the National Association of Probation Officers, and court welfare officers were then part of the probation service. So the NAPO policy was a formal written policy, in a published booklet, which very possibly reflected previous practice, of the professional body of court welfare officers. These people produce reports for the courts in family law children's cases on residence and contact. The policy advocates they support only the rights of women, and ignore those of fathers and children.

This policy subverts the law, and the principles established in the ‘welfare checklist’ of the Children Act 1989 (CA89). The application of the policy in individual cases, which influences the outcome, would be the criminal offence of perversion of the course of justice. Because of subsequent events, I’ll come back to this later.

## **Law and social benefits**

But there’s more to report. Later studies by myself and others showed that between 1967 - 1996 there were a total of 36 laws passed which affect matrimonial and family rights. That’s more than one law per year over more than a quarter of a century.

Any individual considering marriage cannot therefore know his or her rights and responsibilities, as they are not contained in any concise and readily assimilated form. And just as importantly, those who are able to study their rights cannot assume, with this rate of change, that what they have found will apply for the likely duration of their marriage.

The principles applied to a marriage have changed fundamentally over a very short time. The most fundamental principles have been changed by case law without Parliamentary debate, without review by the public, and without the public even being informed.

In addition to these changes to law, it’s essential to realise that in the period up to 2000, social benefits and provisions were changed to remove all of the benefits of the married state for men, while leaving some benefits for women on the death of their husband.

And social provisions gave greater support for lone parents, most of whom are women, than for a married person.

In 1999 the removal of the married person's tax allowance was announced to be effective from April 2000. This action was the removal of the last remaining financial support for an ongoing marriage. Widow's benefits continued, but not widower's, although the UK Government has recently announced, after an application to the European Court of Human Rights, to introduce widower's benefits equal to widow's.

From year 2000 social benefits for an ongoing marriage or partnership will support only those with children, without distinguishing the married state. By now there is also huge support for single mothers. A combination of family tax credit, housing benefits, and so on, and the child maintenance via the CSA, allows women to live in reasonable comfort without having a man around at all. Large numbers of men had seen their civil rights reduced to almost nil, in many cases to a position of servitude.

On the BBC's *Kilroy* programme of Wednesday 30 July 2003, was held a discussion about the support for single mothers, and how fair it was that others should provide it, especially as many had their own families to support. One woman on the programme said that she lived apart from the father of her 3 children. He only stayed with her, so she said, for 2 days a week. We were told that there was a limit of 4 days allowed before which it would be classified as cohabitation. As a result of them living apart she was provided with £200 per week of extra benefits. This is £800 per month. This level of support simply gives women the option to live their lives in this way. Meanwhile most men have no such option, and ordinary families must provide this support through the

taxation system. It has been estimated that tax-payers contribute about £400 per year each to support over 1 million single mothers.

The changes to these social benefits were often reported in the media, usually with supportive comments. The comments about single mothers with children are usually supportive, and the word ‘struggling’ is often used to describe their situation. A father whose wife doesn’t work has more responsibilities, as he has a wife as well as children to provide for. Despite the fact that most single mothers have placed themselves in that position quite deliberately, they are considered more deserving and get more support from the benefits system.

At the same time almost all men must contribute through taxes, to provide for women to have these options. Women may now have a career, or get married and have an easy time, or just get themselves pregnant. And others will provide, whether they like it or not. Meanwhile men have no such options in life.

It is clear, without study of further details, that this history of family law illustrates a very *ad hoc* and unstructured development. It shows a pragmatic approach, on the basis of ‘let us change this aspect now’, without regard for any fundamental ethical principles which could be relied upon to support marriage and the individual’s rights. As I would find out later, after further study, the history also shows involvement of those with specific agendas that are not concerned for the family, or for individual rights. And are certainly against men’s rights and against justice.

If you’d like to study these changes further, the analysis is given in reports from the Cheltenham Group [4].



## Terminology

Somewhere around this period, I haven't had time to study how or when, the language used to describe events also changed. As examples, previously, if one person deserted another, or had been enticed away from a husband or wife, it was called 'desertion' and 'enticement'. I believe that previous law, earlier in the 1900s, could be used to provide justice for the person wronged. Now we didn't have such concepts. We only heard that there had been 'a family breakdown'. People had 'partners' also, a term which is quite meaningless so far as rights and responsibilities in the situation are concerned.

There is so much new terminology, covering most aspects of the situation, it's almost as if this had been introduced deliberately to obscure the facts. Most people seem not to have had the time or notion to reflect on the new terms, or to consider the effect and significance of their use.

Let's look at other situations, for instance, in mortgage arrangements. Either party can withdraw from the contract subject to rules. But no one would ever say that 'the mortgage broke down'. That would be ridiculous.

Later other terms were introduced. Perhaps the most memorable was 'absent father', introduced at the time of the Child Support Act 1991 (CSA 91). It may be that the law used the term 'absent parent', but this was anyway quickly corrupted to 'absent father', against the reality of present day separations. In my case, I was to be called an absent father in court by the opposing barrister. Despite my then wife driving off with the children in the car, to the other end of the country, leaving me in the family home alone, I was apparently referred to as 'absent'. My then wife wasn't referred

to as the ‘absconded’ or ‘deserting’ mother, but I was definitely the ‘absent father’. Like all the other fathers who had been deserted, and these accounted for the majority of separations, this offensive term was used against me.

The example of the term ‘absent father’ in the CSA91 reinforces the view that law making is in the hands of a few, who have their own agenda. It’s another indication of the nature of their agenda, and that isn’t concerned for facts or fairness. An interesting question is, who coined the term ‘absent father’, and who ensured it was used in the law ?

## **Those involved in the revolution**

It’s important to understand that law is being developed in this area by a few influential people. They are the social scientists, lawyers, and especially the judges themselves. I’ll simply provide a list of judges etc attending a conference, edited directly from the Congress Programme which appeared on the website for the conference at the time :

THE 2001 WORLD CONGRESS ON FAMILY LAW AND THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Bath, England, 20 - 22 September 2001

The Right Honourable Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss DBE,  
President of the Family Division of the High Court  
The Honourable Chief Justice Alastair Nicholson AO RFD,  
Family Court of Australia  
Justice Lucien A. Beaulieu, President, International  
Association of Youth and Family Judges and Magistrates,  
Canada

David McIntosh, President, Law Society of England and Wales  
The Right Honourable Lord Justice Thorpe, Court of Appeal (England)  
The Honourable Mr Justice Johnson, Family Division, Royal Courts of Justice (England)  
The Honourable Mr Justice Charles, Family Division (England)  
Professor William Duncan, Deputy Secretary-General, Hague Conference on Private International Law (Ireland)  
Adair Dyer, Attorney, and former First Secretary of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (USA)  
The Honourable Justice Joseph Kay, Judge of the Appeal Division of the Family Court of Australia (Australia)  
Malcolm Broun QC, Barrister (Australia)  
The Honourable Justice R James Williams, Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, Family Division (Canada)  
The Honourable Justice Linda Dessau (Australia)  
The Honourable Mr Justice Singer, Family Division, Royal Courts of Justice (England)  
The Honourable Mr Justice Wall, Family Division, Royal Courts of Justice (England)  
Judge Patrick Mahony, Principal Family Court Judge (New Zealand)  
Joan A McPhail QC, Director, Family Branch, Manitoba Dept of Justice (Canada)  
The Honourable Mr Justice Holman, Family Division, Royal Courts of Justice (England)  
His Excellency Judge Gonzalo Parra-Aranguren, Judge of the International Court of Justice (The Netherlands)  
The Honourable Mr Justice Wilson, High Court of Justice, Family Division, (England)  
The Honourable Madam Justice Marguerite Trussler, Supreme Court of Alberta, (Canada)  
The Right Honourable Lady Justice Brenda Hale DBE, Court of Appeal (England)  
The Honourable Lord Bonyon, Court of Session (Scotland)  
His Honour Judge Peter Boshier, Family Court of New Zealand (New Zealand)  
The Right Honourable Lord Justice Sedley, Court of Appeal (England)

The Honourable Justice Richard Chisholm, Family Court of Australia (Australia)  
The Honourable Mr Justice John Vanduzer, Superior Court of Justice, Ontario, Family Court (Canada)  
His Honour Judge Karsten QC (England)  
The Honourable Justice Rod Burr (Australia)  
The Honourable Justice Lucien A Beaulieu, Superior Court of Justice (Canada)  
The Honourable Mr Justice Gillen (Northern Ireland)  
Her Honour Judge Roddy

- plus other lawyers and representatives of children's rights organisations - too numerous to list here.

So judges are heavily involved in making law, as well as enforcing it. And they do this without reference to the people whose lives will be affected. If the same people make and enforce law, without consulting others, isn't that a form of dictatorship ?

At the top of the list above of those attending is the Right Honourable Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss DBE, President of the Family Division of the High Court. Now she must have some responsibility for current practices in the UK.

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), article 6.1, requires that law cases are determined by "an independent and impartial tribunal". Let's consider how impartial she may be in family law.

The *News of the World* of 17 July 1988 carried an article about Butler-Sloss's husband. Under the front-page headlines "Cleveland Judge Sex Scandal" and "Dame's randy spouse frolics with vice girls" was an article reporting that he was a judge in Kenya and was 'associating' with prostitutes. We may well ask : has her experience of this episode in her life coloured her view of men and

affected her judgements about family cases and men's rights ? If so, is she capable of being an 'impartial tribunal' in family cases as required by article 6 of the ECHR ? In case you didn't know, Butler-Sloss had acted in the Cleveland child abuse inquiry, hence the 'Cleveland judge' reference.

I think any wife who had experienced her husband involved in such activities would be influenced in her outlook on men.

### **How those involved go about it**

The development of law, as well as being conducted by those who are not representative of the people, is done in an interesting way. Instead of basing law on essential ethical principles, those involved decide what they want, and then consider the means of getting that. They decide how they are going to justify their decisions and proposals, then go about finding the justification.

So the Lord Chancellor's Department invites those with the right attitudes to advise them. For example, as we will see later, in 2002 they asked two psychiatrists, Drs Sturge and Glaser, to advise them on child contact issues. Two psychiatrists ? Aren't these people who are trained and educated to treat mental illness ? The attitudes and proposals from these two are, to say the least, highly questionable. The principles they proposed were that the "child's mental health remains the central issue" and "contact can only be an issue where it has the potential for benefiting the child in some way". In a culture in which mothers are usually given custody without any good reason or rationale, these principles will ensure that decent fathers are placed in a humiliating position in court, in which they have a burden to prove they are somehow beneficial to their very own children. These principles may offer some

protection, to some children, in some circumstances. They do not appear to protect a father's rights to decide what is best for his children, or to protect the principle that there should be justice in separation and divorce. There is nothing in these principles that concerns the mental health of fathers.

Their proposals appear to be Sturge and Glaser's own ideas, maybe based on their experiences or some 'research' they are familiar with. They do not appear to purport that their proposals are based on public demand, or on a wide survey of public attitudes, or are representative of any group of people, or are based on a complete and comprehensive set of ethical principles as demanded by most of the people. It's my opinion that their proposals are entirely inappropriate and out of place.

But if we look at other aspects, for example the CSA, we find that this idea was brought from Australia. Yes, those who formulated the law get their ideas from the other side of the world. It's as if they 'cherry-pick' from practices around the world to provide the policies they seek. Obviously if policy makers adopt this approach, they could come up with any combination of policies and laws they wish almost. Somewhere in the world, and I believe there are about 176 different countries in the world, they are likely to find some practice which meets with their own ideals. I don't know about other policies, but it seems fairly probable that most are made without public demand, without public consultation, and without public knowledge. For example, I ask the reader, were you ever consulted about any issue at all in family law? Have you ever been informed?

I think it's fair to say that those involved in policy and law making, and in law interpretation, have forfeited every right of respect which they otherwise may have earned from the people.

## Ethical principles

We have reached the year 2002. But to complete the story of this ‘revolution by stealth’, I’d like to look at the ethical principles involved in the law at this time. The Cheltenham Group report *Restoring Control over matrimonial and family law* of 2002 [4] includes an analysis. Let’s stand back and look at the law as it now operates, in terms of these principles.

The current system is based on the pragmatics of : what to do with children if the parents don’t agree; about fighting over assets; mothers taking advantage of some unearned future income via the Child Support Agency.

We can clearly see a number of degenerate principles : ‘no-fault’ divorce; ‘children’s interests paramount’ applied without restraint, so that the state effectively takes control of children from capable parents; mother-priority without good reason; child maintenance principles that never consider fault or need, that allow women to profit from this, by being better off than normal mothers, that dictate, but only to separated fathers, how much they should spend on their children’s upbringing, that prevent them deciding how the money is spent, and all this without any accountability that the money is actually spent on the children; legal aid provision which supports ongoing legal activity, stripping of family assets, and supports the party with most to gain from the legal process.

All of the several principles currently applied, and listed above, are degenerate for any society, for obvious reasons. Each of them is a major problem in its own right. Together they comprise the greatest

degeneracy, and cause the greatest violation of men's rights, that has ever occurred in UK law.

Anyone who is concerned for fairness, and for support of the family in general, would recognise that the law should be based on essential ethical principles. To list a few, we could insist that the laws : support the family unit and maximise its stability; encourage good behaviour in the family; discourage bad behaviour at separation and divorce; provide justice to individuals; preserve family assets at separation, and prevent lawyers making money from the process; and are known to the individuals before they commit themselves to marriage and/or parenthood.

These seem perfectly reasonable to me. How had this country moved so far from any simple and fundamental ethical principles ?



## **Part 3 : an alternative education : 1990 - 1993**

*The lunatics have taken over the asylum.*

Richard Rowland ?1881 - 1947, American film executive

Attributed remark when the United Artists film company  
was established, 1919

My initial response to Judy going was essentially to take all steps needed to encourage her to return. This was because I had never conceived of life without her and the children. And I could hardly imagine beyond the normal family setting, with myself involved in a normal way in the children's upbringing. My job was stable, we'd just renovated a family home with room for all types of activities, including the children's. Ordinary daily things such as picking the children up from school, taking them shopping to the supermarket, and to the flicks, and so on, I expected to go on. It was inconceivable how they could be brought to a sudden stop. The children were 4 and 7 at the time, and I looked forward to the time when they were older, when they might join me in some of my interests such as fishing, horse-racing, furniture making and so on. I didn't expect them to get involved in all my interests, but hoped they'd be involved in some.

She had left on a Saturday, 4 February 1990. During that week my wife stayed with her sister, and had asked for the children's clothes, as they had only what they were taken away in. On the following Saturday I decided to try to placate her by taking the

clothes to Bristol and seeing the children. As my wife had taken the car, my parents drove me there in their car.

The post arrived as usual on this day, and I took it in the car with me and opened it soon after we had set off. But this time the post included a letter from some solicitors called Paul Stevens & Co in Bristol. The letter said she wanted a divorce based on two years separation, that she would keep the children, and that the house was to be sold as soon as possible. Just like that. But said in the style solicitors use. The almost total destruction of my then life, demanded in a one-page letter. She would later be represented by another firm, Bevan Ashford, who behaved in a similar manner.

When we arrived at my wife's sister's home, the children rushed out with open arms and jumped up into mine and my mother's. They were clearly terrified about what was going on. This was one of the most distressing occasions of my life. We took them out for the afternoon. On reflection, I should have set off back for Newcastle immediately with them, but they were returned.

Back in Newcastle, I did nothing for a further week, but then decided I'd better get some advice myself. I asked one of my colleagues in the law department at Northumbria, Bob Evans, who he'd suggest. He gave me the name of a firm in Newcastle, which I won't give, for reasons that will become apparent.

## **Naming those involved in the case**

We are all aware of the laws on libel. Libel is caused when someone publishes untrue statements about another person, and which adversely affects that person's reputation. The statements are described as defamatory. So these laws are designed to protect

good people from untruths being told which causes them damage, and can provide compensation for any financial losses due to the defamation. Such losses can be high.

If someone tells the truth about another person, then you may imagine they should have no cause to be concerned about libel action. But the legal processes can be very costly and stressful, and cannot be relied upon, and so, even if you tell the truth, the possibility of libel action must be taken seriously.

Some years after these events, as I will explain later, the hosting Internet Service Provider (ISP) of a website was threatened with possible legal action for defamation. It was thought prudent to remove the offending article. Not because it was untrue, but because the laws are wrong.

One example is the Maxwell affair in the 1990s. I understand a lot of journalists knew what Robert Maxwell was up to, but didn't dare publish, as Maxwell was wealthy. I believe the laws of libel in the UK, because of the way they are operated, are oppressive, and prevent much coming into the public domain which should.

So I've removed the real names of some of those involved. The names are replaced with false initials. These people can think themselves fortunate. The rest of us can think ourselves unfortunate, as we are prevented from knowing who they are.

## **Timescales of events & legal actions in the case**

There then followed, mainly during 1990 - 1992, the dissolution of the marriage with legal actions over custody/residence of my

children, finances, and divorce. Some complaints and legal actions against my first solicitors were made later.

During this period, it became clear that the only option which I had to protect my interests, that is my involvement with the children, my home and life savings as they stood in my mid-40s, was to use the legal system. It's essential to realise that I really believed that this country had a fine legal system, which would provide fairness and ensure that some sort of order prevailed in these circumstances.

If only I knew then what I know now, that this was a false belief. As I explain the legal case, you will I hope come to understand why my beliefs were to change radically.

Because of the complexity, it could be difficult to keep track of the details and how they relate. So I've chosen to tell this story, not in strict chronological order, but in related strands, while broadly keeping to the overall sequence.

## **Solicitors**

The firm of solicitors I was referred to had, I later learned, a reputation. I was soon to find out what for. I can't tell you the name of the solicitor or the firm, as I was, as I've mentioned, years later to be threatened with an action for defamation over the contents of a website. And that could be expensive, even when I was quite innocent and had acted honestly.

I remember that this solicitor seemed to think that I should accept any amount of damage and indignity. There seemed no concept that I should have rights, which needed to be firmed up. When the

children returned to Newcastle for their first holiday in Easter 1990, I considered keeping them in the home in Newcastle. I even contacted the school headmaster to check if they would be able to return. I discussed this with the solicitor. Her emphatic advice was not to do this. But the children had been taken from their home, friends and school, and I was only returning them to all this. As there was no court order in existence at that time, I would not have been in contempt, and felt I had every right to return them, indeed more right than their mother had to take them away. So why did the solicitor give this advice ? I could only speculate at the time, but now realise that the solicitors had an agenda that was not concerned for my interests, or the children's interests.

The solicitor's attitude is best described by giving some of their comments during consultations. She made offensive remarks such as :

"she doesn't want to live with you anymore";

"the best thing is to break up this marriage as soon as possible, give me all your financial information and we'll get on with it".

I had said that I could look after the children better than my wife, to which she replied

"who says that ?"

in a snapping manner. And in response to me saying "it seems awfully hard on men in these situations" she replied

"do you know how many women there are in the House of Commons ?" .

As well as these comments, the solicitor decided she would explain likely events and outcomes about the children especially. She added that if I didn't obey the court orders, I could be sent to jail for contempt of court. It seemed to me that I was being threatened by my own solicitor. They also asked me to set up a monthly standing order to them to cover the cost of consultations.

Perhaps the most serious issue was that, despite me asking them to explain the law and my options, I did not learn these facts until much, in fact years, later. I was not told about 'no-fault' divorce, or about the danger of allowing what is called the 'status quo', with respect to the children, to come into existence, or about any of the corruption. I wasn't even told of the dangers these presented. Any decent solicitor should challenge the corruption in court, to provide protection for the male client, and for men in general. This solicitor was, like most of the others, going along with the system. Like most solicitors, she was making money from the system. In her case, she was also advancing the feminist cause, which I was later to learn included the destruction of men's rights in the family.

At the same time I had a will prepared by the firm, this time by another female solicitor. She actually smoked during meetings with me, and blew smoke into my eyes. The will was not finished by her or the firm.

I consider this behaviour not only unprofessional, not only offensive, not only one of incivility, but of villainy. Remember, I was going through the greatest damage and trauma I'd ever known.

It was not until some time later that I realised that these solicitors were feminists, and even had a local reputation as feminists. They were to admit to being feminists in court. I'm now acquainted with another prominent local solicitor, and for reasons of his privacy, won't say who. Having met him on a few occasions, and having mentioned the feminists, who he was well aware of, he recently offered the comment "they're fanatics".

After about two months of this treatment from these solicitors, I dismissed them and engaged a second.

Two years later, when the other more important aspects of my case were ended, I found the time to make a complaint to the then Solicitors Complaints Bureau (SCB) who referred the matter to the Solicitors Indemnity Fund (SIF). I simultaneously sued the solicitors in the Small Claims Court. The district judge, Bullock, who heard the case, dealt with it under contract law, and decided that the solicitors had not been in breach of any contract. I've selected one or two extracts from his judgement and provide them as facsimiles.

Bullock had asked me about the background to my application. Although this seemed irrelevant to the case he was about to decide on, I gave him a very brief account of the case so far. Here is what he said about this :

Mr Worrall is clearly a man who is totally disenchanted with all the legal advice and processes he has been through. He says he received wrong advice from \_\_\_\_\_; he is dissatisfied with his second solicitor, Mr \_\_\_\_\_. He feels that the Judge who heard his custody case was wrong, the Welfare Officer concerned was biased and told lies, even the European Commission of Human Rights has not done its job properly. The cause of all this angst is his failure to obtain custody (as it then was) of his two children. I am told he exercises regular and agreed contact with the children which goes very well but above all else he is consumed by his belief that the legal system and all concerned with it have conspired to deny him his right to have custody of his children.

Most of what he says here I believe is factually accurate. As one example, he says that “even the European Commission of Human Rights has not done its job properly”. He’s absolutely right, the Commission didn’t regard the action of the UK authorities, that is, in stripping an innocent man of his children, his home, most of his life savings and forcing him to send money to a deserting wife, was a human rights violation. I think most people would agree, that the Commission hadn’t done its job properly. From my perspective, it seems that Bullock was simply mocking me in making this and other comments.

However he was wrong about one point. My “angst” was not about “failure to obtain custody”. By this point in time the family law case was finished and the outcomes decided. My “angst” was about the entire uncivilised process and outcomes which I’d been subjected to against my wishes. As we’ll see, it’s reasonable to describe this as persecution.

It is difficult to see how these comments from Bullock had any relevance to the issues he was being asked to decide. His job was simply to decide whether or not I had had a fair deal from my first solicitors. All the other comments from him felt to me like irrelevant and gratuitous mockery of myself.




If Bullock considered that I was confused over the case, then having an educated intelligent man in front of him, surely the sensible thing would be to carefully explain the situation to me, that is, why my case was unfounded. But he didn't explain it carefully to me. And I felt as though he had openly mocked me.

At one point in his judgement Bullock questioned, with regard to having the children returned to Newcastle, "would he [i.e. myself] have taken action [i.e. made application to court] if he had been advised to do so?". And he then goes on to conjecture whether or not I would. He concludes that "only 8 weeks after the separation Mr Worrall was in my view in possession of all the facts and options available to him but he still does not instruct [his first solicitors]". However the solicitors hadn't explained the likely outcomes of major aspects of the case, about children and assets. They hadn't informed me about the 'no-fault' principle, or the danger of allowing the 'status quo' to develop. They had however explained what would happen if I didn't obey court orders. So I wasn't in a position to make such a decision about having the children returned. To assist with his decision, Bullock had used conjecture about what I may have done, had I been correctly advised. My application to his court was about not having been correctly advised as well as the verbal abuse to which I'd been subjected.

This is UK law in operation in the family and associated courts. Bullock's judgement ended with :

I cannot find any breach of contract here nor any failure to properly advise. Accordingly the Plaintiff's claim is dismissed.

  
P. E. Bullock  
District Judge  
11 9

The SCB, on seeing the Small Claims judgement, closed the complaint. I then took the issue to the Legal Services Ombudsman (LSO), who also accepted the judgement without any further investigation. So in what sense is the LSO an appeal procedure ?

So there had been no remedy available anywhere about these solicitors. Primarily because of Bullock's judgement. Many may be shocked that there was no remedy against these solicitors in court. By this time, I had heard the stories of many men, who had no defence against violations of their civil rights. So I wasn't shocked. This experience was simply another indication of what is going on in this country.

My second solicitors, BIC&Q, Newcastle, were far better. How could they be anything else ? But I was still supposed to accept any amount of intrusion in my life by the ex-wife and courts. The partner, EM, acted firmly, while telling me that I had few rights. When I mentioned my rights to him, he said "I can't go around flag-waving".

To his credit, he asked me, regarding my first solicitor, "are you going to sue them ?". He said he couldn't act for me in that, but there were others who could. I had too much on my plate regarding

the children and home to apply time to that, so took no action then.

## **Divorce action**

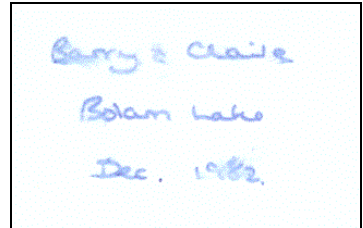
It took several months of legal non-activity before someone acted. My then wife petitioned for divorce on the grounds of my 'unreasonable behaviour'. The petition appeared to me to include many untruths. I went through all 10 pages of it, statement by statement, and considered 95% untrue, the rest just ordinary family events.

As an example, it strangely said that I "would not pick either of the children up until they were at least 6 months old". I have a photograph of us walking at Bolam Lake in Northumberland, of me with my daughter in a sling on my chest. On the back of the photo is a note, in mother's own handwriting, giving the place and date, "Barry & Claire / Bolam Lake / Dec. 1982". As my daughter was born on 15 September 1982, she would have been 3 months old when this photo was taken.

Here is the extract from the petition :

viii. The Respondent would not pick either of the children up until they were at least 6 months old in case they should be sick on him.

and the photograph front and back :



Also the petition alleged that I “would purchase expensive clothes” and “if ... the children needed any clothes such as shoes or winter coats he would complain”. Anyone who knows me, or especially knew me then, realised that I didn’t spend much on clothes. For a lecturer, many might have said that I didn’t spend enough. I’ve certainly been told that since, when I was far better dressed than in those days.

Before my wife left, I had just come to the end of the project to extend and renovate the family home. It had taken all my spare time over a 3-year period 1986-89. This project wasn’t referred to except to say that “for 6 months the Petitioner had no kitchen”, this being factually inaccurate anyway. The petition also alleged that I “would have inappropriate sweeping enthusiasms which he [i.e. myself] expected the entire family to enter into”. It’s difficult to see how such a major commitment to provide my family with a fine home can be omitted, but at the same time say that I had “inappropriate enthusiasms”.

When I read this petition, I was deeply shocked that someone could say such stuff, but of course this person in particular, who I had spent thirteen years with, and had supported throughout. And said in a legal document. My hands trembled. I'd never seen that symptom in any person in my life before or since. They continued to tremble for two days.

After my careful analysis of the statements in the petition, and consideration, I phoned my solicitor, EM, and asked him to defend it. I wasn't going to have anyone saying such things about me, in court or anywhere else. I remember the phone conversation. He told me that he could give me "twenty reasons" why I shouldn't defend. I asked him for the reasons. Essentially he said that to defend it would cost money and serve no purpose. Still believing that it was best to follow a solicitor's advice, I accepted. So he pressured me into accepting it. He did not suggest cross-petitioning.

This was the step by which the system forced me to accept an untruthful petition that resulted in an uncontested 'no-fault' divorce. An indication that the 'unreasonable behaviour' petition was likely to be untruthful would be clear to anyone seeing my ex-wife, as she did not look, even after upheaval in her life, like someone who had suffered from anyone's behaviour. She looked about 10 years younger than her actual age.

Some time after the divorce petition, and realising that this second solicitor had not defended my interests, I didn't ask him to act further.

## **I attempt to have the law applied**

Divorce petitions are sworn documents, like affidavits. If someone tells lies, they are committing the criminal offence of perjury.

It was clear to me that the divorce petition contained untruths. Perhaps her solicitor had encouraged her. But technically, she told the untruths, not the solicitor. Possible criminal offences are for the police to investigate. So I contacted the police. They were reluctant to do anything, but after a letter to the Chief Constable of Avon, an Inspector Archer phoned me. He spent an hour on the phone going through it. I gave him the evidence. I later heard that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) wouldn't act as their criteria didn't warrant a prosecution. Their general criteria are that there should be enough evidence and that it is in the public interest. Apparently there wasn't enough evidence and/or it wasn't in the public interest. I was told that I had no right to see the police report to the CPS. Strange that I later learned that about 100,000 men every year are divorced on similar grounds. But any investigation of a single case isn't in the public interest. Strange.

Other details aren't important. The divorce wasn't contested, and there was a legal judgement, apparently called a 'decree absolute', dissolving the marriage, of 19 December 1991.

## **Custody of the children**

I had to contest custody of the children. By this, I mean that I felt that there was no other option for a right-minded person. It was utterly wrong that a wife could just drive off with the children, when a man had done no substantive wrong, and without even

giving any reasons. I needed to know, what would the law do about this ?

At the next holiday visit by the children, I told them I was going to contest custody in court. Or as I put it to them, that I was “going to ask a judge if they could return to Newcastle”. My son Ross immediately beamed with a great smile. But my daughter appeared a little concerned.

So I contested custody of the children, using EM as my solicitor, and a barrister, a Mr I of Bristol, in Bristol County Court, in front of Circuit Judge Hazel Counsell.

In contested children’s cases, the judge will appoint, at a directions hearing, a welfare officer to prepare a supposedly impartial report which sets out the domestic circumstances and abilities on both sides of the case, especially as regards the children’s welfare. A welfare report was produced by welfare officer DG of Avon Court Welfare Service, which my solicitor EM referred to as a “catalogue of factual inaccuracies”. I’ll say no more. At the hearing, I was asked by Mr I to give my objections. I got through 5 of the 36 untruths or misrepresentations before Judge Counsell said “alright Mr Worrall, we haven’t got all day”. So I was prevented, by the judge, from giving the full analysis. Here is an extract from page 5 of the Note of Judgement taken down by my barrister Mr I, concerning the welfare report :

But he also has heavy criticism. It is clear that Mr. visited both homes, spent time with the children in both homes and chatted with Claire. Mr. Worrall felt that there were thirteen untrue statements, nine unsubstantiated statements, two opinions, seven unbalanced comments, fourteen misrepresentations, nine instances of missing information, two instances of information having been ignored, and one meaningless statement. Some of his criticism is trivial and does not cause me concern. I note that Mr. saw the paternal grandparents and that fact is not referred to. He did not consult the school in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. It seems to me that all in all, the report is sensible and not one which I would basically criticise. It is possible to criticise something in every report.

Despite my protests in court over evidence in the welfare report, not assisted by my barrister Mr I, my wife obtained custody, and myself a contact order. Judge Counsell got around the problems of the evidence presented to court by saying in the judgement that "Mr. G's report does help me but it is not the basis of my decision". I don't recall any consideration of the domestic circumstances on each side of the case during the hearing, that is from witnesses and so on. So Counsell had little other information about the domestic situations and the merits of each side in the case. If the welfare report was "not the basis" of her decision, then what was ? The answer to this question is that there was little basis, as she had almost no other evidence apart from the welfare report.



As far as I know, she was to take no action at all regarding the court welfare service which had placed this evidence in her court.

There is a judgement on custody of the children, of 21 November 1991, in which Judge Counsell doesn't find fault with the "catalogue of factual inaccuracies" welfare report. As you can read, she said in the judgement, about the report, that "he [i.e. myself] also has heavy criticism", and she concluded that "the report is sensible and not one I would basically criticise".

### **Legal aid**

It turned out that my then wife, who I assume initially had no job in Bristol, and therefore no income, obtained legal aid, meanwhile I had to pay solicitor's fees. The feminist solicitor had actually asked me to set up a standing order to them, to cover their fees. Why my wife continued to receive legal aid after starting a job, while I do not, and even though both were earning about the same, isn't clear. So there was no equality here. The legal case costs me real money, while the wife runs her legal case on her proceeds from the home, yet to be obtained. Most of the family's assets had been earned by myself, so I am seeing her spending the money, which mainly I earned, on attacking me.

I later learned that women obtain legal aid about twice as often as men, so my own case was typical.

### **Attempts at mediation**

Early in the case, it had been suggested by my second solicitor, EM, that I should make use of the Family Conciliation Service, which

had an office in Bristol. As there were issues to resolve, I took this suggestion. There were two meetings at which myself and my ex-wife attended, with a woman of the Service in their offices.

My ex-wife would not move one iota on any issue. She wanted almost complete control of the children, and already had this. She had been allowed to take them 350 miles away. She wanted child support, and was already obtaining this. She wanted more than half of the family's assets, and although she didn't have these yet, I was advised she'd probably get that, as she did in fact not long after.

As I thought, correctly, all this a bit one-sided, I also didn't want to concede more.

So there was no movement on either side. The sessions cost, I think £16 each, and I had travel and accommodation costs. Trips to Bristol involved an overnight stay. Overall the sessions must have cost me about £200 and a few days of my time.

Mediation only has a benefit in situations where there is some dialogue, and where the parties are not too far apart in their demands. I would later hear other men tell me similar stories to my own, about their experiences of mediation. I wouldn't be using the service again.

## **Application to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), Strasbourg under Article 6(1) and others**

The outcome of the legal case so far, on custody, had not been based on objective tests, and although the judge had denied that the welfare report was used as the "basis of [her] decision", it was

the only independent evidence available, and was, to say the least, highly questionable. The other things I'd seen going on, including my first solicitor's behaviour, the general lack of support, and the judge's lack of respect for evidence and for my rights, convinced me that things weren't right.

I wrote to both my MP and MEP. Gordon Black was then my MEP, and he sent me leaflets about ECHR. I had to try this route. I remember working late one week in 1991, until 2am from Monday through to Thursday. On Friday I went to bed at a more normal time. I had a BBC Microcomputer in those days, with a very simple word processor called WordPlus. I'd received it as part contribution for some of the consultancy work I'd done. It would seem difficult now to do this without a PC and full word processing facilities.

It was months before a response came. Initially an application is examined by a single judge, who is called a 'rapporteur' to the court. Despite significant evidence of the case, my application was rejected by the rapporteur. No reasons were to be given, despite specific requests for reasons to be provided.

I believe that I was amongst the first of a series of men to take their cases to ECHR. More about this later. General opinion among members of the fathers' groups which I'd joined by now, was that ECHR would not interfere in local custom and practice in family law.

## **Money matters – the start**

There was a hearing, again in Bristol County Court, on money matters. It was in front of District Judge Frenkel. I told him at a

directions hearing about my dissatisfaction with the conduct of the case so far, and of my application to ECHR, and that I intended to re-apply under the Children Act 1989 for residence. A directions hearing is a brief hearing at which a judge will decide what evidence and which witnesses are to be involved, and fix a date for the full hearing. In other words it is about the procedures in the case, not the substance.

District Judge Frenkel was taken aback that a man should have reason to apply to ECHR. He was perhaps out of his depth in dealing with someone who wouldn't accept abuse. He suspended the financial case and referred the case back to Judge Counsell.

## **Complaint against the Court Welfare Service**

Still not satisfied that the issue of the first welfare report had been dealt with properly, I decided to make a complaint against the Court Welfare Service and the officer involved, DG. My complaint essentially dealt with the factual accuracy of the report, and the objectivity in issues related to the children.

I wrote initially. My complaint was responded to by the Senior Welfare Officer, Mr KM. In his one and a half page letter he said that : he had been unable to see the judgement on the court file; he could not check the accuracy of the statements in the report, as that would involve him preparing a new report and he didn't have 'authority' for that; he then concluded that there was nothing wrong with the report. In other words he said himself that he had no information about the accuracy of the statements made in the report, but that the report was satisfactory.

Here is an extract, the beginning of his letter, in which he says that he has no information about the accuracy of the report :

*Avon Court Welfare Service (Family Division)*

Chief Officer:

25 Orchard Street,  
Bristol, BS1 5EH  
Telephone (0272) 277752  
Fax (0272) 255442

Mr B Worrall

Brunton Park  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne  
NE3

Your Ref.  
Our Ref. /  
Date 23 19

Dear Mr Worrall

Further to your letter of 26 19 , I have now had an opportunity to read the Welfare Report, letters, notes etc in the case file and to discuss the matter with Mr . I had hoped to acquire a copy of the Court's formal Judgement but have not yet been successful in this quest. I appreciate the immense amount of time and trouble you have taken to put together the critique which you sent me. I am not, however, in a position to respond to every specific point, as this would be tantamount to preparing a fresh Welfare Report which can only be done on the Court's authority, but will attempt to address the essential features of your complaint which, as I see it, concern (a) the Welfare Report in your particular case and (b) Welfare Reports in general.

As far as Welfare Reports in general are concerned, I have to say that the ultimate safeguard which exists for people, in connection with whom a

And here is a later extract in which he says the report does not “fall below any minimal threshold” :

I doubt if a perfect Welfare Report has ever been written; as with all things in life, some are better than others. Moreover, Welfare Officers operate within a climate of constant demand and financial constraint (fifteen hours is the nominal time allowed to prepare reports) which means that enquiries have to be rigorously managed and can probably never be totally comprehensive. I certainly do not consider that Mr 's Report falls below any minimal threshold which would substantiate your complaint.

I then wrote to the Chief Probation Officer, Mr KB. He had obtained a copy of the court judgement, and relied on that substantially, but he basically said he didn't have anything to add about the accuracy of the report. He says that "I accept Mr KM's comments ... and believe he has answered you satisfactorily". Here is an extract from his letter :

Of course, the welfare officer may get it wrong. As Mr has pointed out to you, the ultimate safeguard is the right of either party to challenge the welfare officer's report within the rigorous confines of the court and before the judge who makes the final decision.

It is clear that you exercised that right. The Note of Judgement (page 5) refers to your 'heavy criticism' in some detail, but concluded that the report is "sensible and not one which I would basically criticise". The Note goes on to say quite clearly "I find...report does help me but is not the basis of my decision".

It obviously is possible to define the 'perfect report' in all sorts of ways. My officers do not write perfect reports, but do the best they can, often under very difficult conditions. I concur with the judge's view of this particular report and can see no useful purpose being achieved by opening a formal inquiry into it. In that sense I accept Mr 's comments on your original letter and believe he has answered you satisfactorily.

So I wrote again. This time, Avon Probation Committee arranged a complaint hearing with a panel of the Chairman, Mr QSU, and two others from the Committee, Mrs NH and Mrs TI. By now I was a

member of Families Need Fathers (FNF) and in touch with their members in Bristol. So I was helped at this hearing by Ron Brake, who was also later to be my McKenzie friend in court. Ron was great. He gave me accommodation at his home in Bath the night before the panel hearing.

The panel seemed to be dominated by the Chairman. They refused to provide a minuted record of the hearing. Their report, some weeks later, didn't find any major problems in the welfare service or in the report. As they said in their formal response "the first Welfare Report was generally satisfactory". I think that item 4.b of their response is referring to criteria in the Children Act, soon to be implemented. The use by them of these criteria was a step which they were bound to take soon anyway, because of the imminent introduction of the Children Act. In other words, according to the response I was given, they did nothing as a result of the complaint which they would not have done in due course, and very soon after. That's what they did, so far as I was made aware. If they would not take action on my first report, with all its bias, I don't think they would take action on any report. It makes you wonder what a welfare officer would have to do for them to take action.

But I'll let you read their full response yourself, and make up your own mind :

Secretary to the Avon Probation  
Committee  
, M.A.

P.O. Box 11,  
Avon House  
The Haymarket  
Bristol BS99 7DE  
Telephone (0272) 290777

**Avon  
Probation  
Service**

Date 24 19  
Your Reference  
Our Reference /Prob /2  
Enquiries to  
Extension 6384  
Direct Line 225299

Mr. B. Worrall,

Brunton Park,  
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne  
NE3

Dear Mr. Worrall,

**COMPLAINT AGAINST AVON PROBATION SERVICE - 20. .92  
FINDINGS OF CCMLAINTS PANEL**

Further to your attendance at the above Panel, I write to advise you that following careful consideration of your submission the Panel finds as follows;

1. that there are not sufficient grounds to require an investigation to be undertaken by the Chief Probation Officer into the conduct of Welfare Officers in the preparation of the reports of 2nd 19 and 15th 19 .
2. that by their nature, production of a perfect Welfare Report is not possible, and in this regard the Panel concurs with the comments of Judge Counsell.
3. that it is not within the Terms of Reference of the Panel to deal with your concerns over Article 6.1 of the European Convention of Civil Rights and its bearing on the confidentiality or otherwise of the Court Procedure.
4. that, taking into account your submission, the following observations and recommendations are made;
  - (a) that while the first Welfare Report was generally satisfactory, the revision to the structure of Welfare Reports arising from the implementation of the Children Act (as reflected in the second report)



is preferred.

- (b) that although the checklist suggested by you is inadequate to meet the criteria for objectivity, the Chief Probation Officer be requested to examine the document produced by Court Welfare Officers in London and submitted by you, to establish whether there are any suggestions which could be incorporated in order to enhance the quality of Welfare Reports produced by Officers of Avon Probation Service.
  - (c) that wherever possible, phrases incorporated within Welfare Reports that could be construed as prejudicial to either party be explained more fully
5. that there are no grounds to recommend to the Probation Committee that it should consider the payment of expenses in this case.

The Panel asked that their gratitude be expressed to you and your friend for your attendance and input into the procedure.

Yours sincerely

Secretary to the Probation Committee

I subsequently asked my MP to help. He said he wanted a legal opinion, which my second solicitors, who knew of the case, refused to provide. They wrote a letter to my MP complaining of the reductions in legal aid. And they charged me for it.

I did not then know about the *NAPO Anti-sexism Policy*, which was not published until 1996, but which appears to have been implemented before that date.

## Residence of the children

The Children Act 1989 (CA89) came into effect in 1991, during my case. When Parliament passed this act, they proposed that shared residence would be more usual. And there was a clearer set of criteria to help judges decide children's issues, called the 'welfare checklist' of s1(3). I assumed that a new law would require the courts to operate by the new law. Also, applying would give the same judge an opportunity to recognise the faults in the previous welfare report. With help and advice from FNF, I returned to court to contest residence.

At a directions hearing, another welfare officer, UC, was appointed. It was clear that he knew about the complaint regarding the previous welfare report. He visited my home in Newcastle, while the children were with me. In fact he came to the ice rink with us that morning, and spectated, not skating with us. But it was his behaviour with regard to the complaint which was noteworthy. When he arrived at my home, I invited him into the lounge. He had only just sat down when he said "you're going over the top with the complaint". Remember that this was a man who would have a very significant influence in the pending court case. I told him that I wasn't "going over the top" at all and that I expected an accurate report from him. He must have listened to me, as after lunch he asked me what it was I was complaining about. I told him in no uncertain terms.

Consider what had happened : he had told me that I was "going over the top" with respect to the complaint. He had asked me later, after lunch, what it was I was complaining about, so he obviously didn't even know the basis of the complaint. How then could he possibly consider that I was "going over the top" ? And remember that, as he was preparing a second welfare report, this officer was

in a very sensitive position. I certainly felt that he had attempted to intimidate me over the complaint about the first report. The second report was far more accurate, but didn't clearly state the children's wishes.

My then wife employed an expert witness, a consultant in the child psychiatry department of Bristol Royal Hospital for Sick Children. Her name was Dr Middendorf. I was invited to visit the department with the children. There was a large mirror on one wall, which I assumed was a two-way mirror. I was to be watched through a two-way mirror? Why? And the children were asked to produce some drawings. One of the drawings showed family groupings, with the children close to mother. One of the things Middendorf said in her report was that this represented the children's real feelings. I had been coerced into this ordeal, but not my ex-wife, and further, because of costs, I was to be made to pay the fees of the consultant who had subjected me to it.

I acted for myself at this application. Anyone who acts for themselves in a case, what is called in law a 'litigant in person', is allowed to have a friend in court, called a 'McKenzie friend', who can assist by guiding and advising. Not presenting the case, but helping the litigant to present. I had useful help from FNF members John Hanson and Ron Brake. They each helped as a McKenzie friend in court for one day at the full hearing.

My then wife was represented by a barrister, Sheila Corfield of Bristol. Before the hearing, in the public rooms, she came up to me and asked if I'd heard of a case 'So-and-so v So-and-so'. I hadn't of course. I couldn't see the relevance of this, and felt she was just trying to fluster me. I was later to witness another similar attempt by another barrister when I acted as a McKenzie friend myself. More on this later.

At this hearing, again in front of Judge Counsell, this barrister cross-examined my Mum, who was then about 69. The questions concerned my character, and seemed to me irrelevant to the case, as no reasonable person could claim that I wasn't a fit father. The barrister was maybe just earning a little more, and I was paying the bill. Incensed, I stood up and told the judge that the questions were irrelevant, and said "I think it would be in order if you told Miss Corfield to shut up". The judge was a little taken aback, but actually did tell Corfield to shut up.

I also told Judge Counsell of my application to ECHR. She replied, "Mr Worrall, you can apply to any court in the world you wish". It felt as though she was mocking me, verbal mockery of an applicant who was trying to defend his interests.

Ron Brake, my McKenzie friend, had equipped me with copies of some reference papers from the Parliamentary debate on the CA89. They were Law Commission 172 and Parliamentary Reference Paper 89/5. These indicated the expectations of how courts would behave. I quoted from them at the hearing. Judge Counsell wasn't familiar with them, and asked my ex-wife's barrister for advice about them. She confirmed to the judge that they were the records of debates on CA89. These papers cover possible shared residence orders, and mentioned that when parents lived a distance apart, that the children could spend term-time with one parent and holidays with the other.

The judgement on residence of children, of 17 June 1992, gave me slightly more contact in the holidays. Parliament's intentions didn't seem to have been followed.

But most significantly, as far as the custody/residence issue was concerned, the same Judge Counsell appeared to have ignored significant evidence in the case about the validity of information in the welfare report. She awarded residence to a wife who had deserted her husband, when the husband was not proven guilty of any matrimonial offence. The 'no-fault' principle had been applied to the child custody issue, a practice which Parliament and the people had not approved.

As I had returned to contest custody again, I had costs of about £5,000 awarded against me in an order of 2 October 1992. So I was made to pay most of the costs of the legal process that was causing very serious violations to my life.

### **The stress of legal cases**

I had acted for myself with McKenzie friends in a hearing which lasted a day and a half. I was shattered afterwards. I decided to head home to Newcastle up the M6 and go via Carlisle. It's much more picturesque than via Birmingham and across on the M18 to the A1.

When I got near the Lake District, and having made good time, I decided to take a diversion, get some lunch, and go shopping in Hawkshead. I stopped at a pleasant pub for lunch, then crossed Windermere by the ferry to head for Hawkshead. It was a clear sunny day, and warm. I got an ice-cream while waiting in the queue of cars for the ferry. The contrast between two days of stress in a dismal court room, fighting for major components of my life, to this situation, in which I was able to relax in pleasant surroundings was just amazing. The relief was immense. It was the biggest contrast I'd known in my life.

## **Money matters – the finish**

There was a hearing over the financial matters. I engaged a local solicitor, CK, in Bristol. Before the hearing, he got into discussion with the opposing solicitor, and negotiated a 25% increase in child maintenance. I consider, as I hadn't asked him to do this, or given him my permission, that he acted on this issue without my specific authority. What a great help he was. I refused to pay his bill but he sued me in the Small Claims Court. I made a complaint about him to the SCB, which would not act against him.

So far as the main issues were concerned, District Judge Frenkel considered, what he referred to in his judgement of 23 June 1992 as, the “conduct of the parties”. This you may think would include all aspects of conduct, including my contributions to the family, the desertion and removal of children 350 miles away, etc, etc. He seems to have considered only conduct as regards money, during the marriage and after separation to that date. I will let his observations speak for themselves, with the first paragraph under his heading “conduct of the parties” which is at end of page 2 continuing on page 3 :

### Conduct of the parties

Mrs Worrall alleges that Mr Worrall was financially selfish. It is agreed that the parties opened a joint current account into which Mrs Worrall's part time earnings were paid. Mr Worrall paid his salary & any consultancy earnings into his own account from which he paid the mortgage, a little over £300 per month & £280 into the joint account. From her budget Mrs Worrall paid all recurrent outgoings on the home, including fuel bills & gave back a weekly sum to him because he did the shopping. Although I accept that from his retained monies Mr Worrall paid for house improvements travel to work & shopping top up money I accept that

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he kept Mrs Worrall & his family short. When Mrs Worrall left, <sup>win</sup> Mr Worrall was not generous with the financial support that he gave her for the children, £172 per month. He refused to consider letting her have anything from the house. This refusal included her personal belongings & some of the children's things. Together with my observation of him during the conduct of the proceedings I conclude that I should prefer the evidence of Mrs Worrall where the parties differ on their evidence.

I've re-read this judgement. At no point that I can find did Frenkel look at other aspects of conduct. The judgement appeared to be based on selective issues of conduct, as I've said about money only, and based on allegations without any item of independent corroborating evidence.

Frenkel said to me at the hearing "I want the litigation to stop". But I'd only applied for custody of my children twice, once before and once after the Children Act came into force. This was not unreasonable given that a new law had just been introduced. Why should he put pressure on me not to resort to litigation again? How else but through a legal application could a man defend himself?

The legal action was an application under s25 of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 (MCA73) as amended by the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984 (M&FPA84), and Frenkel says at the beginning on his judgement that “section 25 tells me the factors that I must take into account in the balancing exercise that I must undertake at the end of my judgement. I shall now consider those factors making findings on the evidence, as necessary”. It’s worth looking at the factors Frenkel was supposed to apply. S25 says that “the court shall have regard to the following matters - (a) the income ... of the parties; (b) the financial needs of the parties; (c) the standard of living enjoyed by the family before the breakdown ... ; (d) the age of each party ... and duration of the marriage; (e) any physical or mental disabilities ... ; (f) the contribution which each of the parties has made or is likely in the foreseeable future to make ... ; (g) the conduct of each of the parties , if that conduct is such that it would be inequitable to disregard it; (h) ... the value to each of the parties ... of any benefit ... that party will lose the chance of acquiring”. That’s what Frenkel was supposed to consider and balance, as if balancing so many factors consistently could be humanly possible. But some factors such as “the conduct of each of the parties” must be important if we are to provide justice.

Frenkel’s judgement appears to me to be based on the ‘no-fault’ principle compounded with selective elements of financial conduct, which were based on mere allegations. This seems to be what he used to justify his judgement. And his observations included that I had “kept Mrs Worrall & his [i.e. my] family short”, a statement for which he had no corroborating evidence. It is difficult to see how there could be any evidence, as there was no truth at all in this. Neither did Frenkel mention my contribution to the family’s greatest asset, the house. Or my having spent 3 years immediately prior to separation, extending and renovating this



into a fine family home. He did not appear to consider my ex-wife's behaviour, including desertion and removing the children 350 miles distant. It is difficult to see how he could have used evidence more selectively.

And he said about me "Mr Worrall was not generous with the financial support he gave her for the children". What possesses this judge to think that an innocent father, who has been deserted by a wife who has also abducted the children from his life, should be "generous" towards the deserting wife? He also refers to myself in "my observation of him during the conduct of the proceedings" without saying what he had observed in me, and he decides to "prefer the evidence of Mrs Worrall". What had he observed in me, apart from an innocent man's reaction to seeing his life destroyed by the very legal system in which Frenkel was playing a major role?

In the judgement of 23 June 1992, and an order of 21 September 1992, the money was distributed, and the house ordered to be sold.

Immediately after this hearing on money, I was very stressed and worried about the position I'd be left in financially. I took one of the beta-blockers I'd been prescribed, but had recently stopped taking, and headed for the pub to calm my nerves with a few pints. Staying in Stroud with the parents, Vi and Bert, of an old school-friend of mine, Peter Mortimer, I used the excuse to walk their dog, but headed straight for the pub instead. They got quite worried when I was late in returning, and came out to look for me.

Still living in the home that I'd just spent 3 years renovating and extending, I was ordered to sell it myself. That meant the usual process of estate agents, showing people around, etc. And finding a new home myself. I couldn't even afford a semi on the same estate,

and ended up with a small terrace house close to Gosforth High Street. When it came to the actual house move, I opted for Easter in 1993, as that would be in my holiday and would give me time to sort things out. The children would normally be with me then, and I thought it would be useful for them to be involved in moving into the home which they would know during their holidays in the coming years. When my ex-wife noticed this, she refused to sign the completion document. I had to threaten legal action to get her to sign. I did this by telling her solicitor one afternoon maybe about 3pm, that if I didn't have positive agreement by 5pm, that the court papers would be sent off first class the following morning and so her client would have to defend the action. The agreement arrived before 5pm. It was to be the only issue I was to win in the entire case, a trivial issue compared with the substantive ones, and caused solely by vindictiveness of an ex-wife who was assisted by a solicitor in what she wanted.

My ex-wife was allocated 60% of the value of the matrimonial home in which most of the family's assets lay. It was worth about £72,000 net. She also got the endowment policy which should yield about £35,000 in 2004, although she had to give me half the then cash-in value. And half of the other assets. In addition I was to provide her with £2,592 per year for child maintenance, which was a 25% increase, courtesy of 'my' solicitor. I was left with about £25,000 after legal bills of about £15,000 were paid, and my pension, and left to continue working in order to earn another house starting from the age of 45, which was not going to be easy before I retired.

So she obtained from the house about 60% of £72,000, a value of about £43,200.

If we also remember that I had already significantly maintained her during the marriage while the children were young for about 9 years. She had worked part-time, but had lived well, certainly beyond what half a normal salary would usually provide. This is worth about £8,000 pa over 9 years, that is a value of about £72,000.

And the child maintenance would continue even when she remarried, which was about 2 years after the money matters were dealt with. It's important to realise that if a woman remarries, but still gets child maintenance from the previous husband, then that income is over and above the income she previously had. So she profits from the process, in this case by about £2,592 pa for 10 years, a value of about £25,920.

Now I understand that children cost more than this to raise, and that they are my children. However, because of the mechanism, women profit from the situation after getting rid of a husband. If there had been no marriage there would have been no children and no child maintenance. So I will include this amount in my estimates.

We can add together these major elements she had obtained from me as a result of marriage : the value of myself assisting maintaining her while she worked part time when the children were young; the capital she received from family assets, which were largely earned by myself; and the ongoing child maintenance. We see that she had obtained about £141,120 from me as a result of marriage. A tidy little sum to improve one's life. About the value of a decent little family home. But no mortgage to pay on it. I've shown here the financial benefits which are directly attributable to marriage, for a woman who marries and deserts a husband. The

figures in this case are typical for the time and for ordinary folk who earn their living.

The ‘no-fault’ principle had been applied to the financial issues, against Parliament’s laws.

## **Complaints about judges**

The Lord Chancellor is the person who appoints judges. I’d heard that it was possible to make complaints about judges to a section of the Lord Chancellor’s Department. In my naïvety, I decided to make complaints about all the judges in the case. Of course this had not the slightest effect, on either the case, or I assume on the judges. I got no response at all.

## **Other issues outside of the legal framework**

There were other significant problems outside of the appalling legal system. The ongoing nightmare of keeping in touch with the children; sale of the home that I’d recently spent 3 years of my spare time on; keeping the job going; and rebuilding a social life without wife and children. All of this was an immense strain which affected my health. I suppose you could call it a protracted nervous breakdown. If it hadn’t been for support of colleagues, I may not have been able to keep the job going. Certainly I visited the doctor more regularly than I’d ever done before, and was put on the beta-blockers for the best part of 2 years. I’ll say no more than this.

My wife had looked after our joint bank account, and handled all of the regular bills for electricity, gas, phone, and so on. I didn’t even know the amounts on the standing orders. I couldn’t find the

bank account records, so assumed she had taken them with her, and hence had to contact the suppliers to find out what the bills were. This mundane problem was just one of several I had to deal with.

One evening I was giving a part time class at the university. Feeling faint during the class, I thought I was going to pass out, but didn't. I don't think the students were aware. After the class, back in my staff room, I still felt so unwell that I doubted I could get myself home by bus. So I decided to phone the university health service for advice. They weren't available in the evening, but the call was diverted to the security staff. One of them decided he'd better take me for a check up, so ran me to the Royal Victoria Infirmary casualty department. A doctor soon looked at me, but couldn't diagnose anything. He seemed to concentrate on the heart, but checked my eye co-ordination and so on. So they let me go. I was so stressed however that I called by at the pub on the way home for a few pints.

As I have no history of fainting or heart problems, and the doctor at casualty appeared not to be able to give a positive diagnosis, I put the condition down to stress.

I was later to hear of cases of men referred to hospital, and knew of regular media reports of murder and suicide. I came to realise later that I hadn't done so badly.

There were some incidents, which looking back at, now even seem funny. I was out for a drink with a friend, Dave. He had brought a neighbour with him. This neighbour wasn't the most interesting person I'd ever met, and went on about his difficulties in arranging his television aerial to pick up a decent signal. There I was in the pub, in the process of being separated from my children, home and

a lot of my life savings and future income, and there he was moaning on about his television reception.

There were other direct effects. At the time of my wife leaving, a colleague at Northumbria, Bill Henderson, and myself had negotiated to write a text book on computing. It had been planned, with the help of someone from some publishers whose name I can't recall. Writing had not yet started. It's provisional title was *Real-time : technology and methodology*. Bill was to do the technology part, about digital systems, myself the methodology of development of the software for such systems, as these were our areas. When I was suddenly presented with huge domestic and legal problems, I realised the book wasn't going to be completed. Bill was very good about it. I suggested he find someone else to replace me, but I don't think he bothered. So the world will have to wait for my first text book.

The attitudes of some, who knew of my case, were usually a lack of interest, and were sometimes disturbing. As an example, I was once casually discussing what I'd be doing at Christmas with a woman who was a teacher at one of Newcastle's top girl's schools, Church High in Jesmond. I told her that I'd have my children staying with me for Christmas and would be doing things with them. She said, regarding the children staying with me, "how did you manage that?". This one comment says volumes about people's attitudes : it implies that maybe a father shouldn't normally have his children with him at Christmas. And this was a supposedly well educated woman saying this. We have to consider the culture in our society that supports such attitudes.

There are one or two other specific issues that arose which I hadn't anticipated, and which are worth telling.

## Children's travel issues

Judge Counsell had decided that the cost, and effort, in arranging travel for the children, between Bristol and Newcastle, should be shared. I was therefore required to pay half the cost. As my ex-wife had no incentive to arrange any travel, I was put in a position in which I was obliged to do it.

This was forced on me, even though my ex-wife had gone off to Bristol on her own volition, and just to live near her sister. She, and this judge, had imposed this situation on me, and I had no control over it.

For the first holiday, the children had been exchanged at a motorway service station near Manchester. This was very unpleasant. The judge had suggested I look at flights. In a sense this was useful input from the judge, but only useful if you accept that someone should be allowed to take children 350 miles way. So they travelled by air for the next several years. It was initially £99 for both to travel both ways, a good deal. And they could travel unaccompanied, being looked after by a steward or stewardess. The discount was 50% for under 12s if I remember, but by the time they were about 14, the cost was £236. When this is 4 or 5 times a year, the cost becomes a factor to consider. By the time they were 14 or 15, they could travel unaccompanied on the train. My ex-wife even contested this, but I told her in a letter she'd have to pay the additional costs of flights. She didn't go further with this demand. So they travelled by train from about 15 years old.

The cost of half the travel can be estimated. Let's say the average cost per round trip was £100, and they travelled on average 4.5

times a year, and this went on for 12 years. I was required to pay half. That's a bill of £2,700 forced on me.

This is an expense which ordinary fathers don't have. It was entirely due to my ex-wife's wishes, to move near her sister. As she was my ex-wife, why should I have to pay to meet her requirements, her mere wishes? Yet another outrageous demand on me. Common sense tells us that, unless I'd somehow contributed to the situation, I shouldn't have to bear any part of the costs. But a woman's wishes are judged paramount in our country it seems, and they shouldn't have to bear the costs or consequences of their own decisions themselves. Not if there's a man around from whom some money can be extracted.

## **School issues**

I initially wasn't told which school the children had been placed in. I had to write to a few before I found the right one. Getting reports from schools has always been a problem. When they transferred to Winterbourne High School, I didn't automatically receive parent's newsletters or reports on the children. At one point my letters were ignored, and I had to write to the Chair of the Board of Governors, threatening legal action if they didn't send me reports. This threat had the right effect. But when my daughter left, the newsletters stopped again. Again I had to write to the school. I assume they had my address on her file, but not my son's.

As my son Ross wasn't progressing as well as hoped, my ex-wife placed him in a private school called Silverhills. The reasons for his slow progress may have been attributable to the upheaval and trauma he'd suffered. Certainly, he seemed more affected than my daughter. The cost of the school was apparently about £3,000 pa.



She even had the nerve to ask me to pay half of this. As I considered she was responsible for Ross's condition, and my financial position difficult, she appeared to have no sense of reasonableness.

## **Children's healthcare**

The children were traumatised by being taken from their home, family, friends and school without warning. This was clear from some early visits I made to their school, and when I collected them. I won't describe the incidents of them clinging to me and crying and so on. You may be able to imagine. I never want to see such distress in children again.

On one visit to Newcastle, maybe around 1992, my daughter let slip that she and Ross had been to hospital, over a period of maybe a year. This was news to me.

The sequence of events isn't remembered well, but I believe I contacted their family doctor, Dr RCW Hughes of Frampton Cotterell, who said very little but that they had been referred to Dr NH of Bristol Royal Hospital for Sick Children. The child psychiatric department. This was because of behavioural difficulties at school and home where they wanted to sleep with mother. This was a shock. So I phoned the hospital. The male psychiatrist, Dr NH, was both obstructive and unpleasant. He actually said to me "what's it got to do with you?". Incensed, I contacted the hospital's management, and was replied to by the Assistant General Manager, Julie Crowley. She offered some help, but I had to threaten legal action against the hospital. This would have been under CA89 for a s8 'specific issues' order against them for information about the children's treatment. A day or two later

the psychiatrist phoned very apologetically, and gave me some information. The children had been having 'behavioural' problems which had settled down. But the formal response from the hospital was that if I paid the £10 fee for a copy of the files, I could have that. Unsure if I could understand the files, and seeing no reason why I should be involved in expense, just to obtain information about my children which I should have been entitled to, and indeed would need, if I was to assume any responsibility for them. I didn't accept this offer. Ordinary parents don't have this hassle and expense, so why should I? If anything, because I was operating under difficult enough domestic circumstances, I should have more help from the hospital than an ordinary parent, not less, and certainly no extra expense.

That psychiatrist is supposed to look after the mental health of his patients. He certainly wasn't doing much for my mental health.

## **Sorting out my financial situation**

When I sold the family home, it was to be necessary to re-mortgage myself, and this I did in 1993 at the age of 46. As an academic, I thought I'd get advice from Teachers Assurance, and their local financial adviser, Sheila Gray came to see me. As a representative of Teachers Assurance, she was really a sales person, although I think her card used the word 'adviser'.

I explained that I needed to re-mortgage, and why I was in this position. During the discussion she said something like "so you've been taken to the cleaners?". Yes, she actually used that expression. She had her laptop with her, and printed the usual estimates of repayments etc. She advised a mortgage with Portman Building Society, who gave an initial discount, and an endowment

policy with Teachers. I would have preferred to take out a mortgage over maybe a 15 year term, so that it would be paid off by the time I reached 60. This was going to be expensive in terms of monthly repayments, so I went for 20 years. If I'd gone for a shorter term, I wouldn't have much money monthly to get out and about with, and now a single person, didn't want to be hampered in this way. The endowment would not then mature until I was 66, but Sheila Gray convinced me this wouldn't be a problem with my pension.

About five years later, when I got to 50, I decided to take a careful look at my finances, and re-arranged a few things. I realised that the endowment would in fact be a burden if I still had it as I moved into retirement. In the press at the time were stories of endowment mis-selling, and complaints being made. One of the bases for complaint was that endowments would not be paid off before retirement. So I made my complaint to Teachers. After about 18 months of correspondence, I get compensation. But it only placed me in the position I would have been in had I taken a repayment mortgage.

I don't think I'll use a financial adviser again.

### **Splitting the furniture etc**

I suppose we didn't argue much over the other belongings. She had taken the car with her. She wanted a few things I thought unreasonable. Such as an item of china, a cup and saucer, which I'd bought from the Geldermalsen hoard which had sunk in 1756. The district judge had to decide on a few things, but allowed me to keep this item as I'd bought it initially. But he awarded her the television set, which he thought more useful to her with the children. Is television good for children I now wonder? And she

wanted an item of furniture I'd made, the sideboard. I wasn't going to part with any of these items, but she had the nerve to ask for something I'd made with my own hands.

One day, probably at the end of 1992, she arrived with a removal van. It was unpleasant. She walked around the house she'd left some two years before, as if she hadn't ever left, and as if nothing had happened since then. She knew where her own books were in the bookcases, and just took them. Her father came too, but wasn't allowed in the house. He waited with the van. My parents and some friends came to the house to help keep the peace. As I say, it was unpleasant.

I heard from the children later that the television set was stolen when her home was burgled. I had selected that television set carefully as a sensible buy for the family, using money which mainly I'd earned. I was later to see it effectively confiscated by a judge and given to a deserting wife, then stolen by a burglar. A man's endeavours for his family twice removed. Great country we have, don't we ?

## **The unresolved problems**

It's maybe worth summarising the issues in the legal system for which I had obtained no remedy.

The behaviour of my first solicitor : it would be prohibitively expensive to sue them in the County Court, as I would have a potential legal bill of £10,000 - £20,000 if I lost. And of course, having approached 4 authorities already for a remedy, it was clear there was to be no indication I could succeed.

The advice of my second solicitor, which had essentially been to accept a 'no-fault' divorce : successfully complaining seemed impossible, given that I couldn't even get a remedy to far worse treatment from my first solicitor.

What I considered was a highly untruthful divorce petition : I've already described that the judges had taken no notice of this, and the CPS had refused to act over my request to investigate it as a possible case of perjury.

The inequality in the availability of legal aid is another issue. I have no idea even today about complaints to the Legal Aid Board, or whatever other remedy may be available. There probably isn't one.

The judges had made judgements which I thought were without fundamental ethical principles. While it was always clear to me that this is fundamentally a constitutional issue, concerned with the development and control of laws, I had then no ideas on how to proceed on this.

The court welfare reports were heavily biased, and I felt an attempt to intimidate me had been made over a complaint which I had lodged. There had been a lack of a remedy about the bias in the first welfare report at the Avon Probation Service panel. I investigated who was responsible above them, it turned out that the Home Office was vaguely, but the Probation Committees were largely autonomous bodies. There was apparently no direct complaint to the Home Office. So there appeared to be no authority in the UK who will accept responsibility or bring remedy.

The judge had never once even met my children, did not seek their opinion, would never meet them in the future, and would never

receive reports on their progress. This judge had effectively taken control of my children from me.

The ‘child’s best interests’ principle was supposed to have been applied to the issue of the children’s future. However, I was clearly as capable of providing day-to-day care as my ex-wife. Yet I was allowed to provide this only 2 months out of 12, for the following 12 years. From the children’s perspective, they had seen their own father deserted by a wife who had then been given absolute priority over themselves and their father’s life savings and future income. The children have usually avoided such topics. As my daughter reasonably said once “it’s nothing to do with me”. My son once mentioned his concern for his future, mentioning ‘pre-nuptial contracts’ to protect himself. I told him they did not exist in UK law, even though I knew he couldn’t understand the full legal picture. But there must be an adverse effect of their experiences on both their moral outlooks.

On the lack, as I saw it, of any objectivity in the decision of residence of the children, I could only think at the time of an appeal to the Court of Appeal (CoA) and House of Lords. I obtained the CoA application form, and submitted it with the £75 application fee. But I also had taken advice from my second solicitor, and from men who had tried appeals such as Sean McGuinness in Wales. I was told there was no case law in the last 50 years to suggest any possibility of remedy, so withdrew the application. Years later I was to learn about the major events in case law, and other developments, which had led to this situation, in which I would find no reasonable prospect of a remedy.

It was a similar situation with finance, that case law would determine the unjust financial outcome. My second solicitor suggested at the time that I obtain barrister’s advice. This cost

£250 and was from Jonathan Cohen of 4 Paper Buildings, Temple, London. It suggested that a court would decide I should obtain 50% of the home and there would be an increase in child maintenance. So I had legal advice, for which I, in this case, even paid separately. There was no case law in the last 25 years to suggest any possibility of remedy from the Court of Appeal or House of Lords.

This is a total of 8 separate issues for which there was no remedy, each of which had a major effect on the case. And I had made 6 complaints to responsible authorities, none providing a remedy. I realise that I did not possess the resources to try for any other remedy for even one of these. It was clear there would be a serious risk, and it was highly likely I could have totally ruined myself in attempts to remedy even one of these.

I already had deep seated grievances, for good reasons, and had developed a hatred of the UK matrimonial system and those who interpret the law. It would be later, when I found out that my problems were shared by many other men, that I would turn my attention to the political system which allows these things to continue.

## **A summary**

The results were that the life of an innocent man was seriously degraded, with major outcomes including : children taken 350 miles away and the consequent difficulty of meaningful input to their upbringing; most available assets, which I had earned, were removed and given to a woman who had deserted me, allowed me no opportunity for amends, and then used an untruthful petition to divorce me; enforced support for a woman who had deserted me,

and who, especially after remarriage, was as a result of her actions, better off than she had been while married to myself, and better off than any other normal family i.e. had benefited from what she has done; marriage to myself has brought this woman a total of about £141,120 in unearned monies from my life savings and income, when I was not guilty of any matrimonial fault.

My parents were generally aware of the overall case at the time. A comment from my mother, entirely unprompted, perhaps sums it up. She said “evil’s broken out”. I never thought I’d end up in a situation in which I’d need to try to defend myself against the judges and politicians of our country. But that’s exactly what has happened.

But to emphasise the specific issues : outcomes of the legal case, including children, home, assets and on-going child maintenance, were all decided on a ‘no-fault’ principle, when I was being divorced using what I considered was an untruthful petition, and was not proved guilty of any matrimonial fault; and while my wife had deserted me, so being guilty of the pre-1969 matrimonial cause of desertion; serious abuse of myself, with serious injustices throughout the case by a number of those involved, and judges who appeared to use evidence selectively, and ignored every decent person’s ethical principles; all this together with a complete lack of remedies to these issues from all of the responsible authorities that I’d contacted.

My ex-wife had been assisted with her legal costs by state funding in the form of legal aid, and I had been made to pay for all my legal expenses until I decided to act for myself, and even then had been forced to pay for some of her costs. I had decided to act for myself because of the lack of support I’d received from my lawyers as well as the expense.



I had placed complaints in front of 8 responsible authorities, and had received not one remedy for any issue. I had been subjected to : serious verbal abuse from my own first solicitor who was a feminist, and felt treated with mockery by 2 out of the 3 judges who I put issues in front of, while defending my reasonable interests.

In addition to problems with the legal system, I suffered discriminatory treatment from hospital and school compared with an ordinary parent, abusive treatment from a hospital child psychiatrist who had treated my children, and difficulties in obtaining information from schools.

It's reasonable to say that I suffered a protracted nervous breakdown and was in trauma. This was due partly to the shocking behaviour of a wife, but much more due to the lack of protection, in fact the persecution, applied by the legal system. In the first 2 weeks after my wife leaving I lost more than 1 stone in weight, and I was later to find myself suffering panic attacks which caused several embarrassing situations, this resulting in me being referred by my GP to a hospital psychiatric unit. And the effects were felt by others, my mother suffering a minor heart attack at the time which placed her under doctor's orders for a while.

A major characteristic of this case is that I was overwhelmed with the legal problems, and could not remedy so many issues in such a short time, due to lack of time, lack of support from lawyers, and of course lack of resources.

The legal system held me responsible for my children, but only so far as financial support was concerned. The focus was on getting money from me, not ensuring that I was responsible for their diet

or their clothes or for their moral outlook, or any other aspect of their upbringing. It was simply an attitude of 'let us get some money off him'.

Perhaps the most significant issue in the case is that marriage had provided no rights or protections whatsoever. In fact it had provided the opposite of this. The outcome caused me enormous stress, several traumas, damage to my mental health, and great expense which was never budgeted for, and which I would not have incurred had I never married. And I was left with several aspects of my life, especially my family, my finances, and my health, in a seriously damaged condition. And there appeared to be little support from the services of our country, to assist with these.

### **A summary in the simplest possible terms**

My wife had deserted me, for what I considered no good reason, and was never required to explain herself to anyone on this issue.

The authorities of the state then took control of my children from me and had allowed them to be taken 350 miles away. They effectively confiscated most of my available life savings and made most of these over to my ex-wife, who made a total of about £140,000 from the marriage, at the time the value of an average house. And I was required to send money each month, for what was to be the following 13 years, on the pretext that my ex-wife 'needed' it. I was also forced to give up my home and re-mortgage myself in my mid-40s.

Having done 'the honourable thing', that is to get married, I later found this had provided me with no protections at all, available within the legal system, from violations of my most basic civil

rights. In fact it was the legal system that primarily caused these violations.

All this had serious negative effects on my health.

There had been serious injustices demonstrated by most of those involved in this legal process. But I thought especially from the judges, all 3 of whom appeared to apply selective, if not highly selective, use of evidence and argument, and certainly had applied a 'no-fault' principle.

I had been verbally abused by a feminist solicitor, threatened with jail by her, and felt as though I'd been treated with open scorn and mockery by 2 out of the 3 judges in the case.

My ex-wife was financially assisted by the state in the legal process. The lawyers made about £15,000 from the legal case, drawn from family assets, money which mainly I had earned.

When I protested about several aspects of all this, to 8 of the various responsible authorities in the UK and Europe, they completely ignored me.

These processes and their effects can be described, without doubt, as unmitigated evil.

### **Some perspectives on this**

It is inconceivable that all these things happened, as random events, in this single legal case, in a casual and unintended grouping. This would imply therefore that they did not occur by chance.

There had been no corrective mechanisms in operation to prevent these things, and no remedies available to me when I had asked. So the situation can be described, quite reasonably, as a complete breakdown in the rule of law.

I had not set out on my career to make a fortune from others, and had not lived life 'in the fast lane' as some do. There was no substantive wrong in the matrimonial or criminal sense. I had concentrated on a stable life, as a university academic in the public sector for most of my career. And I had done more than many men to ensure my family were provided for, especially in terms of the home which I had just spent 3 years renovating and extending with a lot of my own effort. In short, I don't think, given my background, that I could have done any more for this country or for my family.

It is worth noting that, with this background, I hadn't even been allowed to continue my life in this modest way.

## **Part 4 : a part in the response : 1990 – 2004**

*The occasion is piled high with difficulty,  
and we must rise with the occasion.*

*As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew.*

Abraham Lincoln 1809 - 65, 16<sup>th</sup> President of the USA

From speech *Annual Message to Congress*,  
1 December 1862

In facing difficulties, the initial and immediate problems have to be dealt with first, as best as possible. After that, there may be time for some reflection on what happened. But no one goes through a major upheaval in their life without some change in outlook or philosophy. I was no exception. I've described my attempts to deal with the immediate problems. Let's see how my outlook developed.

The detail is complex at times, so I've again linked together related topics, while keeping to the overall history.

### **Initial involvement**

In the middle of 1990, still looking for support, I visited the offices of Relate, to see what they could offer, especially on the reconciliation issue. They weren't able to offer help at all there, despite two or three sessions of counselling. I think the counselling

was supposed to help my understanding of what is euphemistically called the 'family breakdown' or allow me to come to terms with what was being imposed on me. This was completely irrelevant to me, and served no useful purpose. It wasted my time and money.

There was one useful outcome however, which I hadn't anticipated. I was given a single photocopied sheet of phone numbers for organisations that could be of help. One of the numbers was for a group called Families Need Fathers or FNF. It turned out to be a support group for men facing the same problems as myself. Looking back to that time, it seems unbelievable that, in my mid-40s, I'd never heard of any such group, despite the prevalence of separation in our country.

This was the point at which I realised that men had begun to organise themselves in response to the situation they faced, situations just like my own. And there were lots of them apparently. I was initially elated that I'd contacted others in the same predicament, and could get advice and compare experiences. If you bear in mind that the assistance I had received from solicitors was worse than useless, you may understand why I thought such a fathers' organisation was important. But a fuller understanding of the effectiveness of such a fathers' group, and this one in particular, would take some time to develop.

I had however been aware of one men's rights group already. That was the Campaign for Equal State Pension Ages or CESP. It was concerned that men weren't getting a fair deal in the state pension racket. I'd been a member for a few years. They were subsequently renamed Parity, and I'll come back to them later.

I phoned the FNF number and joined. It cost £18 a year then if I remember, for which was supplied a quarterly magazine called

*Access*, but more importantly, you joined a network of men. I enthusiastically phoned the ‘local contacts’ as they were called. The actual local one didn’t say much, didn’t organise local meetings, so really wasn’t much help at all. But others in the South had more to say. One was called Vic Parks in Reigate. He advised that I move to Bristol to keep better in touch with my children. But what if mother moved again ? What was I supposed to do, follow her around the country ? I had a stable job, and would have to find another in Bristol. This was unthinkable given the state of my health. No way was I going to give up a stable job for an unknown quantity, move away from my friends and family, and for unknown benefit.

Soon after, I can’t remember when exactly, I heard of another group called Dads After Divorce or DADs. I joined this group too, and had much better advice from one of the founders, Ian Kelly, who spent about an hour on the phone explaining my options. I was to see much more of Ian in the future.

There were lots of phone calls to various people. More than I can remember. They were useful, not to help my case, but to let me know there was a whole network out there. And to identify the useful ones.

One evening I was told that I had similar views to John Campion, and should phone him. I did. It was a revelation. He was the only person I’d contacted who could see beyond current practices, policies and ethics. And beyond the thoughts of existing groups. With innocent people in mind, I said to him “if a person leaves a marriage, they shouldn’t be allowed to take anything with them, such as children and assets, they should just leave”. John said “what a breath of fresh air”. He understood that this was typical of the usual outcome in law before the 1969 reforms took full effect.

## **Families Need Fathers and dismay**

I went to FNF's AGMs in London. Maybe the first was in 1991. I'm not sure. I had told some of them that I'd applied to ECHR, Strasbourg, and this caught attention. At the AGM I was accepted onto the National Council (NC). My university has many students on professional placement for one year, as part of the sandwich courses. I was one of the visiting tutors, so I chose students on placement in or near London to visit. This gave me the opportunity to also attend FNF NC meetings. They were then usually on a Thursday evening, maybe quarterly, in the upstairs room of the Churchill pub in Mount Pleasant.

I wasn't impressed with most there. They were in support of fathers having more contact with their children or sharing residence, but that was as far as it went. There were some who could see further. I felt that asking for more contact or shared residence wasn't enough. There should be justice in the system. After all, if someone crashes into your car, and it's a write-off, you don't ask them to repair the near-side front wing only, do you? You want the whole car repaired. Consider: you crash into someone else's car, and it is a write-off; if they leapt out, remonstrated, but then only asked you to repair the near-side front wing, you would think them a little odd? or even a little off their rocker? This is analogous to the attitude of the leaders in FNF.

There were a few old-timers. Trevor Berry was one of the founders from 1974. Colin Hale was an early member if not a founder. James de la Mare as well, he was secretary. An odd character, he once said, with respect to solicitors "we can't go around criticising professionals". What did he think he was about? Did he not



understand what was going on? I was later told by Henry Hodgins, of a break-away group in Birmingham, that de la Mare had suffered as badly as any. And Reg George, who seemed to be asleep through most meetings. Vic Parks, who'd advised me early on, was a member and then secretary. Most came from in or near London. Penny Ewens came from Leeds. At the time, I travelled furthest I believe. Arthur Baker was from Sheffield, and stood for Chairman one year, and won. But he couldn't handle the hassle, and soon resigned. I'd met Arthur separately, including one weekend in Saltburn on the Yorkshire coast. A pal of his put us up on the floor of his flat for the weekend.

One incident is worth recalling. At a regular NC meeting, the forthcoming AGM and public meeting were discussed. A prominent member, Charles Kenyon, who lives in Market Rasen or somewhere in Lincolnshire, had a good idea. He'd invite a speaker who would give us a lecture on how to be better fathers. I didn't think I'd joined a fathers' rights group to be lectured to, especially on how to improve myself as a father. I believed I'd joined the group to fight for my most basic civil rights. I took the suggestion as an insult. I told the meeting so, in no uncertain terms. Charles Kenyon was affronted that someone should criticise his suggestion so directly. He came around the table and said something to the effect of "I'll see you outside later". So there I was, being threatened by a member of the NC, someone who should be fighting for me, not against me.

I went to a few AGMs. At the open meeting after the AGMs, I met a number of others. Ivor Catt lived in St Albans and was once a researcher with Clive Sinclair's company. A very bright bloke, he was also the most traumatised man I ever met. Because of his case I mean, although I can't describe this in detail, but only tell you that he felt under attack by all those involved in the legal aspects.

John Mortleman of East Grinstead was an older chap who was well acquainted with what was going on, having spent £180,000 on his legal case, for no benefit. Graham Townsend, whose second wife Jenny was on FNF NC, had been left with only the washing machine. And he hadn't seen his children since. Perhaps due to the stress, he had a problem with the nerves in his legs and had a limp. They had put me up on one or two visits to London, in their flat in Hanwell. Other horror stories came along regularly.

I heard the main parts of the stories of these men. Different in detail, but all similar in the abuse they'd been subjected to. I heard many more stories from others by phone. We didn't have the Internet in those days. It initially seemed odd that the press and media had never reported these cases. Later I realised they were part of the problem.

There was even humour in some of the FNF publications. I remember only one joke. Question : "what's the difference between a High Court judge and Saddam Hussein ?". Answer : "one of them believes that children should be used as hostages during a conflict, the other is an Iraqi". It certainly conveys some of the FNF member's attitudes towards judges.

At one point I'd contacted groups in other countries. One prominent group, SOS Papa in France was led by Michele Thyson. He lived in Paris, where they had an office in Le Pecq. He had extended SOS Papa with a group in Spain, and was keen for further expansion. He envisaged SOS Papa France, Spain maybe UK, and so on. He offered to visit us. I arranged a meeting in London, and met him at Heathrow when he flew from Paris. Graham and Jenny Townsend kindly let me use their flat for an initial discussion in the afternoon. In the evening we moved to Colin Cooper's home in Middleton Road in E8. A few other FNF

people took the trouble to attend, including Steve Stevenson. He criticised the idea of co-operating with a French group, actually in front of Michele. This was typical of the FNF attitude to any initiative other than their own. I still receive the SOS Papa quarterly magazine. It's well produced, and deals with similar abuses to those in the UK. Michele had also produced a report *L'Enfant et sa Famille Disloquée : Analyses et propositions* giving history, with graphs of data from the 1960s onward, showing what he called the dislocation.

After further contacts around the world, it was clear we were dealing with a problem across all Western World countries. And that was clear even before the Internet became widely available in the late 1990s. After that, we were to see the full picture. All countries across North America, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, extending into Eastern Europe and Russia, had men's groups. There were groups in Iceland, Yugoslavia, and Japan.

### **Local meetings and specific cases**

I also wanted to play my part in rallying local groups. So I set up regular monthly meetings in Newcastle. Initially we had a room at the Metrocentre, one of the first out-of-town shopping centres. The Metrocentre land was owned by the Church of England. Rooms were initially available for free to charities, and FNF was a charity. Later they wanted to charge £30, so we moved to the Department of Social Security sports centre at Longbenton. Kevin was a regular and worked at DSS, so he arranged the room. We had a visit from Elizabeth Lakey, the FNF regional organiser one evening. I'd already met her at NC meetings in London. Attendance dropped, we moved to a pub, and then I stopped the meetings. I heard many other stories at these meetings.

Kevin had been cut off from his children by the mother's actions. Last time I saw Kevin was when he remarried. By then he hadn't seen his children for 6 years. But they still wrote to him for money at certain times, that was the only contact he had.

One local chap, Tom, had moved to Aberdeen after his separation. A trust had been set up to ensure his daughter had funds in the future. But his ex-wife wanted to get her hands on it. She wanted to do this by ensuring that she was a trustee, so there was a hearing in front of a District Judge in North Shields County Court. Tom asked me to be his McKenzie friend in court. I suggested that the best argument he could use was that it didn't make sense to allow the beneficiary of the trust to also be a trustee. Otherwise there is no rationale for having a trust. The District Judge was none other than Bullock. He that wouldn't give me justice over my first solicitors. And he probably knew that I'd made a complaint about him to the Lord Chancellor's Department. I think he must have remembered me. Or perhaps he just accepted the argument Tom put forward, that trustees should not also be beneficiaries. Either way we won the case. It was to be the only time I was a McKenzie. Nice to have won the case, and especially against a mischievous ex-wife. His ex-wife was represented by a solicitor called Mrs Rose, who I was told had a reputation as a feminist, and by a barrister of Trinity Chambers, Newcastle, who went under the name of Crispin Oliver. Tom was accompanied by his sister who had come along to give support, and myself. Before the hearing this 'professional' barrister came up to us and said "are you seriously going to go through with this?". It seemed to us a deliberate ploy, as Tom's sister said at the time, "to ruffle our feathers". So both Tom and myself later made complaints to the Bar Council about this man. They did nothing of course.

One case was somewhat dramatic : it was that of a local chap called Eric, who I'd known as one of a group of regulars at the Gosforth Hotel in the High Street. He had a small shop in Chillingham Road selling and servicing heaters and other domestic goods. He had called to get advice. I gave him the best I could. A few weeks later, I heard that he'd collapsed and died in his back garden. They found him the following morning. I was told later that he'd previously had some sort of heart condition, but it's likely that the stress was the final cause.

Another local case is worth recalling. I think this father, called Ritchie, must have made contact by phone initially, but I met him at meetings later, a few times. His wife was a nurse, and worked shifts. One Sunday, she came home from work in the evening about 7.30pm. He had already put their two sons in bed. She was accompanied by two police officers in their own car. They came into the house. While she went upstairs to get the children, the police held him in the lounge, explaining that they were there to prevent a breach of the peace. She got the children from their bed and put them into her car. She drove off with the police car escorting her. Ritchie had no idea where they were taken. He was on tranquillisers for a fortnight. The police had actually assisted this woman to take the children from their beds, to an unknown location. Is that a proper role for police officers ? As it happens, he later found out where they had been taken to, and contested custody. I'm pleased to say he now has that.

In another case I was told of over the phone, a man's wife had worked in a pub, but had an affair with the manager. She got custody as usual. One day, after he had collected the children on a planned visit, he found himself stopped by the police. She had phoned them, saying the children had been abducted. The police just took her word for this. I don't know the subsequent outcome.

Another came to the local meeting saying that his ex-wife's male friends were beating him up in the car park at Whitley Bay when he came to collect his child. The police would not act to provide protection, and he was asking us for advice. Again, while we gave our best, I don't know the outcome.

And yet another case is worth telling. Ken was in the Royal Navy. After separation, his wife had cut him off completely from the children, and had moved another man into the home. Ken was so traumatised by this that he broke into the home one day. I'm not excusing him doing this of course, although he was under great pressure. There was an injunction on him to stay away from the home. So he ended up in jail. While in jail, he was moved around, he'd been in Durham and at one time in Lancaster. His wife, for reasons known to herself, moved between homes in the North, one of which was near Lancaster. When she heard that he was in Lancaster jail she complained to the police about how close he was. The first thing Ken knew about this was when the prison officers collected him and his belongings from his cell, and put him in a van back to Durham. It was only later he learned why this had happened. I'd met Ken's father and mother, who came to my home seeking advice about contact issues, as they were going to apply to court themselves for a contact order with their grandchildren. One day, Ken's father invited me to go with him to visit Ken while he was in Durham, the only time I've been in a prison in my life. I remember Ken's father saying that he'd lost all faith in human nature. The last time I heard from Ken, I learned that the Navy had allowed him to return to his job, but he later left to train as a teacher.

An acquaintance called Frank had left his wife. She had chosen not to work. So Frank, having left his wife, was held liable in the

legal case to provide for her. The judge told him that his wife had “sacrificed a career for him”. Think about this : he had provided her with the opportunity and the option not to have to work; he had supported her for years; it was of her choosing and her own volition to exercise that choice not to work; he had had no such option. We can argue that if anyone owed something, she owed him for this massive support. Yet the judge twisted the situation around and told him that she had made a sacrifice for him. And the judge confiscated a lot of his life savings to keep her in the manner she had become used to, that is to be kept by someone else.

I once employed an electrician to rewire the kitchen as part of the renovation in my new home. He told me the story of a friend of his, who had been living in his own home in the west of Newcastle for 4 years. His girlfriend, who already had a child, moved in. After 1 year they fell out. He was required to leave, so she took over the house he had been paying the mortgage on for 5 years. She got the house off him.

Some of the stories were heard by chance. Many were from men who phoned to ask for advice. And those that were collected, I’ll explain later about the survey that John Campion organised, were accomplished with very limited resources. It’s clear that a systematic survey, with full resources, would uncover a great many more, and reveal the full picture.

I had lots of phone calls, asking for advice. At one point it was perhaps one a week. One call came from a man in Stornoway, from where his wife had left to go to a women’s refuge in Edinburgh. Another call came from Norway. The man wanted to know if it was safe to return to the UK or would his ex-wife get her hands on all of the house he had in the UK ?

Another case is worth reporting. A close colleague in the group, not local and I won't say who, told his daughter just how his ex-wife had behaved. His daughter never spoke to him again. This illustrates the respect which men now receive. And no one, neither his own family, friends, nor the legal system, had gathered around to protect him.

A colleague from Vickers Management Services, Mike, still an acquaintance of mine, had married a solicitor. He had been married to her a few years and they had a daughter. She was supposedly babysitting for a friend just along the road from home. When she didn't return on time Mike went along to bring her home. He found her in bed with another solicitor. She got custody of their daughter, as usual on the grounds of 'no-fault'. This happened at about the same time that my wife deserted. Later, Mike was quite supportive of me at the time. I'm pleased that he's now happily remarried and with a new family, living in Edinburgh.

And then there were cases reported by email and on websites. Amongst them, some stood out. Mark of Plymouth was sent to jail by a judge for waving to his children. Really. I'm not exaggerating. Sent to jail for waving to his children. Now I know you're thinking 'but there must be more to it than that'. There isn't really. He was under a court order to have no contact whatever with his children. We need to ask the question 'why should any father be under such an order?'. Anyway, Mark was, but thinking it unreasonable, ignored it. So he was sent to jail for contempt. The case has been referred to the European Court of Human Rights, so let's hope the government are brought to book over this. This case illustrates the respect with which men and fathers are currently held. I recall a visitor to one of the local meetings, who came along out of



professional interest. She was doing some research in law. In discussion, we mentioned that there should be a penalty for women cutting contact with a father, to which she said “but you can’t put mothers in jail”. It seems judges won’t, but will put a father in jail for far lesser offences, such as waving to his children.

Those who have been to local meetings of men’s groups quickly learn that most of the men attending are there to get support and advice. And just to have a good moan to each other. Few seem to see beyond this, or realise that it serves little useful purpose to tell each other what they already know.

It’s depressing to see men behave in this way. This raises the issue of how and why men can’t see beyond their immediate problems, can’t see a wider picture. Further, that they, in many cases, just accept their fate, as if it was inevitable. Their morale, or rather the low state of their morale, clearly needs to be investigated.

When the attendance at local meetings dropped one year, I found myself sitting in a room waiting for others who didn’t appear. So I stopped organising the local meetings.

## **A common theme**

I noticed a common element to a number of stories. To start with an example or two. One case related to me involved a man who had a successful transport business in Australia. When problems occurred and he lost control of the business, he tried to remedy them. His wife thought he was ‘obsessed’ with the matter, and deserted him. She ended up with a large detached house in a popular area in Northumberland together with a new husband, and he ended up in a flat. Another case near Newcastle involved a

man with a printing business, and similarly when things went bad he was deserted. He ended up bankrupt, and was forced to travel to Wakefield just to see his daughter.

So we have a repeating pattern of cases in which the man suffers job loss or business failure, and the wife's response was not to provide support, but to desert him. And in doing this to ensure they kept control of the children and most of the remaining assets. Judges don't merely allow this, they actually provide the mechanism to ensure it happens.

### **Taking on the editor role with FNF**

After a couple of years on NC, the FNF editor's job became vacant. I can't remember who had held it, but I offered myself. Unchallenged, I was voted in at an AGM. This gave me an opportunity to bring wider issues to the fore, especially human rights laws. However, I found that individual initiatives were not rewarded in FNF. Quite the opposite. The 'old guard' always put a stop to ideas not their own. I continued for 2 years. Towards the end of this period, Bruce Lidington was Chairman. He was a successful actor, and once had a minor part in *Eastenders* or some such soap. I met him a number of times, including at a party in Islington given by another prominent member, Eugen Hockenjos. We'll return to Bruce later, as unlike other FNF stalwarts, he was open to working with other groups, and this was to prove very useful.

## **The Child Support Act**

In 1993 the Child Support Act 1991 (CSA91) came into effect. Already involved in organising local meetings, for FNF, we were suddenly inundated with calls from fathers in further distress due to the CSA.

This could have been used to bring in members to FNF, but, despite invitations, the people involved thought it better to set up their own meetings and groups. I remember going to meetings in Newcastle and Gateshead. The Newcastle meeting was at the Friend's Meeting House in Jesmond, and I told those who came about FNF. Few joined. The Gateshead meeting, if I remember right, was at the Civic Hall near Birtley. Better attended, and with good speakers, and a solicitor called Lyn Rutherford plying his trade, when there was little or nothing any solicitor could influence about the CSA, as it is outside the court system. And a meeting in Carlisle that I drove across to, which was attended by Eric Martlew, the Carlisle MP. The groups involved later formed the Network Against the CSA (NACSA).

Some demonstrations were organised, and I took part in one at Stirling, where the Child Support Agency had a centre. We had a coach, and both my children went along as they were with me at that time, in the holiday period.

Those taking part in the local meetings and in NACSA did not appear to see a wider picture, so they simply attacked the CSA, that is the Act and the Agency.

Some of the attitudes also seemed very odd. A common opinion was that once Labour got back into power, the Conservatives having been in government for some time, and the CSA having

been created in Thatcher's time, all would be put right by Labour. This opinion appeared to ignore the reality of the situation, that the Labour Party was almost certainly the most feminised in history, to later have women-only shortlists of candidates, and to appoint a Minister for Women. Strange how some people react to the positions they are placed in.

## Beyond FNF

Apart from myself, others were dissatisfied with the existing groups. Mainly with FNF. The dissatisfaction resulted in splits. In fact, the whole of the men's and fathers' rights movement has been rife with infighting and splits. The Birmingham and Oxford branches of FNF split away to form the Association for Shared Parenting (ASP), maybe about 1995. Other individuals left, to do their own thing. It was a trait in FNF that if somebody tried to change anything, or lead an initiative of their own, they would be restrained. I'd been restrained while editing *Access* magazine. But I had at least spread the word about ECHR challenges.

After a couple of years, someone stood against me for the editor's position and won the vote. It was John Baker. He seemed very weak in concepts and policy to me. It seemed all he wanted was for 'new man' to be able to look after children. The issue was far bigger than this.

While on NC, a few people came and went. Ambrose Neil was one. He wanted to change things. He stood for Chairman. Others, as well as myself, supported him. The East London branch was larger than most and had its own newsletter called *McKenzie*. The old guard, or the editor of *McKenzie*, wrote an article which rubbished Ambrose and his mother. It was unusually sent to all or most FNF

members around the country, days before the election at AGM. This precipitated libel action. To help settle it, we even had a NC meeting in Southampton, so that most of the London people wouldn't attend. It was properly constituted, and passed resolutions to settle the case. These events were followed by Ambrose being essentially expelled off NC, at a meeting at which the old guard had a voting majority of one, and nullified the Southampton decisions. And that included the Chairman, then Jim Parton, almost waking up Reg George to cast his vote. John Mortleman, disgusted with what he saw at NC, gave a Nazi salute as he left the upstairs room at the Churchill pub. I stayed in touch with Ambrose for a while. The outcome of the libel action was unclear to me. Ambrose said things that weren't reported in FNF's newsletter, which said things that even I knew weren't true, and glossed over others. I was surprised that those fighting corruption could be so corrupt themselves. By this time I wasn't shocked by much.

## **Competition within and between groups**

In these organisations there is little or no management control. People are invited to take on responsibilities, on the basis of their reputation and enthusiasm. But this is without any system of qualifications for the role, and without any further vetting by way of selection tests or interviews etc, that would be associated with most of the better established organisations and businesses.

And, especially when members are separated by distance throughout the country, and communicate mainly by email, they often show little respect for others. In fact judgements on other people's worth are made on the flimsiest of knowledge about them,

and often with bigotry. And comments about other people are made 'behind their backs'.

However, many genuinely want to achieve change in the country for the better, but do it in their own way. Most organisations allow individuals to take on the tasks they feel happiest with, and that's no bad thing.

Almost everyone recognises that there is great scope for achievement. This creates significant competition to be the person who thought of an idea or led a project. Each new leader has the answer. And maybe one will soon. But they don't want to share the fame with even one other person. A healthy respect for the contribution of others is missing from many men's dealings with others.

This situation frequently brings out the worst of individual's characters, and I won't describe specific instances, as they are really a bit mundane, but they exist.

### **A new initiative**

One day I wrote a letter to the editor of CESPAs newsletter. Now having considerable insight into the family law situation, and having heard about other aspects of discrimination against men, I suggested that if men were discriminated against in a number of areas, there was perhaps a case for an organisation with a wider remit than just the state pension problem.

I didn't know what I'd triggered. I'm not claiming fame, and am not familiar with the detail of events, but soon after, someone had set up the UK Men's Movement (UKMM). That was Roger

Witcomb. And another, David Hughes of Newport in Wales, had started the magazine that was to be UKMM's, called *Male View*. David later gave me recognition for the letter at a UKMM AGM held at Imperial College, London.

## **John Campion and the Cheltenham Group**

In 1994 John Campion suggested we organise a national meeting of prominent members of the various fathers' and men's groups. I was always keen to involve as many groups and people as possible. In my naïvety, I thought it would give us strength and we would draw from a greater range of talent. Living in Newcastle, I was aware that there was untapped talent in the North, and certainly FNF had a large presence mainly drawn from the South East. I had contacts in Scotland, including in Parents Forever. I therefore offered to invite those people. For the first time, we had someone who would arrange a meeting on a professional basis, and each had to contribute £10 towards the room and sarnies. We met at a hotel in Witney, Oxfordshire on the Friday evening, and intended to continue on the Saturday at another hotel in Cheltenham. My records aren't clear but I think the dates were Friday 3 and Saturday 4 June. The groups represented were FNF, DADs, UKMM, Parents Forever, and others. Among those attending were Ian Kelly of DADs, Roger Witcomb of UKMM, Paul Duddy of Parents Forever, Ian McKay of FNF, a solicitor who was on-side called Adrian Pellman, myself, and others making up about 20-25 people. John Campion himself chaired the meeting.

Some of those present had never attended a national meeting before. They were used to the usual weekly or monthly local meetings at which men get together and moan. One of those was Ian McKay of FNF, who was an accountant of some sort. Everyone

was asked to give a brief introduction to themselves, their reason for attending and their position on issues. So Ian just told us his story. We'd heard it all before, that is in terms of the problems involved and it was really no worse than many others. In fact by now I'd heard far worse, several times.

On the Saturday, John set about explaining to the others why marriage is important. He took us back to first principles. At lunch time, we decided to call ourselves the Cheltenham Group, as the meeting was then in Cheltenham. It was John's input that gave us the correct philosophy and approach. As a result I believe the Cheltenham Group, and the UKMM in turn, have the best philosophy of all the UK groups.

It's important to understand that when a separation occurs, some rules will be brought into play. The rules used to be called matrimonial law. But some sections of society don't agree with marriage. The feminists were clearly out to destroy marriage as it gave men rights. For most of us, especially the men, we not only want to know the rules, preferably before we commit ourselves, but we need to have some input into the rules. We don't want to impose unreasonable rules on others, but we certainly want to know that the rules are reasonable to ourselves. The people who will be affected should decide laws, not others with agendas. After all, when you take out a mortgage, you want to know the rules, and you don't want others interfering with these rules after you've signed up to the mortgage.



## Defining and documenting the problem

John had realised that it was essential to document what was going on. He had met others in the South to discuss this possibility, but so far the initiative hadn't been taken further.

In 1995 John contacted Bruce Lidington of FNF, and discussed a plan. FNF was the largest single fathers' group, with then about 1,500 members. It was agreed that CG would prepare the questionnaire, FNF would distribute to their members, and CG would receive and analyse the responses. We had 346 responses out of the FNF membership, then of about 1,500. Not bad. The questionnaire was 8 pages and provided for details of marriage, separation, divorce, outcomes about children and assets. And space for a brief written description of the case.

In order to analyse these, I suggested to John that he obtained reduced size copies of the central pages, 2 to 7, with the detailed responses. These were to be sent to Sue Secker, a FNF member, who had offered to help. And the back page was to be copied full size for myself to categorise.

At Christmas 1995, I categorised the written descriptions. I had a number of categories, about 15, such as bad solicitor's advice, a biased court welfare report, and so on. It took most of a weekend. I had to read the story, decide what was the single most significant aspect that stood out, then placed it in the appropriate pile. The piles were labelled, and covered the coffee table, chairs and floor of my lounge.

And at about the same time Sue Secker got used to a spreadsheet, and produced a comprehensive statistical analysis from the

questionnaire responses, which included the married states, children, duration, and outcomes, etc.

We held a meeting at the home of Mark Thomas after Easter 1996. Mark was, and as far as I know still is, a teacher at Reigate Grammar School, and then had the use of the flat in the school grounds. John Campion, myself, Robert Whiston and Mark were there. I had arrived first, on the Saturday, so Mark cooked a meal for the two of us in the evening. Unfortunately Mark was too ill to take part in the meeting on the Sunday. We planned the report John had wanted, in terms of sections, and the major statistics we wanted to draw out.

## **I get better equipped**

In March 1996 I took the step of buying a PC. A P75 with a hard disk of 1Gb. It cost £1000 and came with MS Word 95 and Excel 95. It transformed my capabilities. Soon after I bought a HP DJ 600 printer. This gave me good word processing capability.

More than this, I later obtained an Internet connection. This would change much of what I, and others, did and knew. The result of the Internet being widely available has been a great increase in information available, and in the networking of men throughout the UK and the Western World.

Receiving regular bulletins by email, and via websites, was an immense improvement in organisation of the men's groups. It was encouraging to read about the many initiatives going on. Including applications to ECHR, and constitutional challenges in other countries.

## **Publication of results of survey in *The Emperor's New Clothes***

Now adequately equipped, I offered to word process the report we'd designed. We initially produced a report of the statistical analyses. Then the whole report. It was to be called *The Emperor's New Clothes* to remind of the Hans Christian Anderson story in which only a young child can see and tell the truth.

We had support from others fortunately. As well as Sue Secker using a spreadsheet to analyse the figures, another acquaintance from the Reform Club meetings, which I describe elsewhere, called Brian, had a business in London. He offered to have his staff do some overtime to word process the hand-written case descriptions that I'd categorised. This saved a great deal of time, and we were very grateful to Brian. I also edited them, but only to remove actual names, replacing them with initials usually. As we hadn't actually asked permission for each to be published, and we wanted to respect the authors' privacy, this ensured that no one could know who the people are who contributed their case.

The statistics confirmed what we already knew, that innocent men were experiencing gross violations to their lives. But even to ourselves in the group, they were an eye-opener. I'll reference the report and give example statistics.

Briefly, out of the 180,000 divorces each year, about 100,000 men, who are innocent of substantive fault, are seeing serious destruction to their lives in terms of children, home, life savings, and future income, while their wives profit from the process. This is mainly because of the 'no-fault' divorce principle, with fabricated 'unreasonable behaviour' petitions being used in two

thirds of cases. About 120,000 children experience this. There are statistics about aspects of this which the government hasn't collected, and which we've never seen in social science research surveys.

It's worth perhaps giving some further statistics, to illustrate what I'm referring to. Let's have a few : number of currently married men who will be divorced is 7,355,900; of these, 3,338,800 will suffer a fabricated petition; number of men who suffer obstruction to contact with children is 109,800 per year; money transferred to women at divorce is £3,384,720,000 per year; total maintenance to be made over for children for separation cases in one year is £2,752,053,300; same figure for total maintenance to be made over for ex-wives is £1,276,430,400.

And I could go on. But it is probably the statistics which illustrate the effects and outcomes in individual cases which are the most interesting. They're readily available in the references.

Another acquaintance was Norman Dennis, a well-respected social researcher, then as it happened based at Newcastle University. John Campion knew Norman as one of those he'd invited to take part in the conference of November 1994 which I describe later. John sent him an early version of the report. Norman kindly wrote a foreword for the report. Here it is :

#### Foreword

The new report from the Cheltenham Group, an association 'fighting for the family' in the old sense of the term, does two things.

First, it gives chapter and verse to the precise mechanisms through which the legal system itself has

been wilfully and consciously used to destroy the institution of marriage, against the clear letter of the law and Parliament's stated intentions. It does so in a way that gives everyone the chance to check through their local library whether the Cheltenham Group is right or not in its facts and interpretations.

Only with last year's Family Law Act was marriage abandoned as a life-long commitment that could be terminated only if the innocent party consented to the termination in the event of serious misconduct of the guilty party. But the report shows, with incontrovertible evidence, that for twenty years before and more, men had been the victims of a court system that increasingly acted on what can ever only be a legal fiction, that in marriage breakdown neither party could be 'at fault' (or both parties were always equally at fault) and therefore the law would only act on the assumption of 'no fault'. The principle and terminology were both lifted straight out of motor-car insurance. The sole idea in both fields is to save everybody - everybody except the innocent party - argument, trouble and expense.

Secondly, it documents a series of case studies. By the nature of things, the individual reader cannot check on the harrowing stories the fathers report in convincing detail. We hear only their version and their side. But from what they say, one thing is quite certain. If to be a conscientious and committed husband and father was today even vaguely politically correct, both parts of the report would be at the top of every 'fearless campaigning' journalist's list of truly sensational scandals of the second half of the twentieth century to be exposed; of manipulating professionals to be brought to book; and of widespread and deep-seated individual tragedies, many of them too late now to be corrected, to be at least and at last recognized for the shameful injustices they were and remain.

Norman Dennis, 15 February 1997

Formerly Reader in Social Studies,  
Guest Fellow in the Department of Religious Studies,  
University of Newcastle upon Tyne

Just seeing the statistics we'd produced raises the issue of why others had not conducted any similar studies. We wondered what most of those university social science researchers actually research. It's obvious, having seen their contributions in similar areas, that many of them only research the topics they want to prove to themselves. And most are women, and feminists. I can't see the justification for the word 'science' in this context. One thing seemed certain, that neither the government, nor the Lord Chancellor's Department, nor any other relevant body, had ever bothered collecting the statistics and information we had in the report. None of them had any interest to see this overview, concerning what the courts had been doing for the last few decades.

Still on the NC of FNF, I took the statistics report to them, and suggested they might like to publish it. I thought they would be very interested, as it was information drawn from their members. So it described what was happening to their members. They found reasons not to publish, mainly based on the novel idea that the statistics were not representative of the overall situation. I was told they were self-selecting cases. The fact that they were drawn from a survey of FNF members, and that FNF NC should be well equipped to know what was happening to its members, didn't seem important to them. Thick, or just obstructive to ideas not their own? This was one of the last straws. Despite John Campion encouraging me to stay on FNF NC, so we knew what they were doing, I'd had enough. This and the Ambrose Neil business finished it for me. Soon after, I resigned FNF's NC.

## **A conference**

Another CG meeting was arranged. This time we decided to hold it in the North so that the Scottish members could attend more easily. I organised a room and accommodation at the YWCA in Ambleside in the Lake District. It was held on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 September 1994. There were about 10 or 12 of us, John Champion, Roger Witcomb, Ian Kelly, Paul Duddy, Eugen Hockenjos, Colin Cooper, myself and a few more whose names I've forgotten. We planned strategy.

John Champion and Roger Witcomb were keen on organising a conference. They had contacts, including Dan Amneus from the USA, Norman Dennis and Patricia Morgan in the UK. The conference was publicised and attracted about 50 people. It took place on 26 November 1994, at the Mount Royal Hotel, Marble Arch, London. During the conference, a group of homosexual rights campaigners invaded the room, beating drums and making a lot of noise. The hotel's management had to be called and they were removed. Merely discussing marriage and the family drew violent anger from some quarters. There is a taped record of the papers presented.

But the conference achieved little of lasting use. It didn't influence policy makers.

## **A 'convention on family rights'**

Enthused by what I'd learned from the Cheltenham Group meetings, and being familiar with the various human rights conventions of the UN and European Commission, I had an idea.

The various conventions cover, in some cases, separate aspects of people's rights. For example there was the UN's International Protocol on Civil and Political Right (UN ICCPR). I realised that, while there was some mention of marriage and family in these conventions, nothing covered this area in detail. In particular the existing conventions don't define what marriage is, or what specific rights parents, especially men of course, should have over their children. There is a vague reference to "the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own ... convictions" in the European Convention on Human Rights, article 2 of protocol 1.

I decided I'd write a 'convention on family rights' myself, even though I wasn't sure what I was to do with it. I would at least know if such a convention could be produced, and maybe get support for it. I knew I had extremely limited influence and that getting support would be a challenge to say the least. Looking back now, at the time of writing, I think it shows considerable maturity for someone who is not a lawyer, and who had little experience of these matters. It defines the rights of individuals to control their own lives, and indicates possible democratic control over these issues. The copy I found on my computer is dated 21 November 1994, and I include it in the appendices.

## **Ongoing women's campaigns**

There have been continuing campaigns by women for improvements to their lives. Often these are at men's expense.

For example campaigns for better healthcare for women's cancers. This may seem reasonable, and who could deny that we all deserve the best healthcare possible ? But when nearly equal numbers of



men die from the men's cancers, and there is no call for equal shares of the healthcare funds, is that so reasonable ?

Another example was the issue of pension splitting after separation. Sometime in the late 1990s a group of women campaigned for the right to obtain a share of their ex-husband's pension. They called themselves, if I remember right, 'Fairshares'. They appeared only to have campaigned for a year or two at the most, before the law was changed.

It seemed to us in the men's rights movement, that if you're a woman, you only have to get yourself some letterhead and write to a few MPs, and within no time at all the law will be changed. The time in this case seemed merely a few months.

The fairness of the change is questionable. It may appear fair at first sight, that spouses should share the pensions accumulated during marriage. But we have a culture in which a significant number of women positively choose not to work, and are effectively kept by their husband. Now, if the husband deserts them for no reason, well perhaps that husband should share his pension if there was no provision made for the wife. However, if the wife has taken advantage of the husband with all the benefits of marriage, spends her husband's money freely, and deserts him, for no reason, why should she continue to get the benefits of the marriage after leaving him ? Also, we must bear in mind that many couples' budgets are set for foreseeable events, and that separation is often not budgeted for.

## **The campaign against the Family Law Act 1996**

John Campion realised that this new law must be fought, as it sought to build a number of degenerate and anti-men principles into law, including the ‘no-fault’ principle into written law for the first time. He’d made a number of useful contacts. One was David Wills, who worked in the City, and was a member of the Reform Club on Pall Mall. So we had a series of meetings there on Thursday evenings in 1995. To be able to attend, I arranged to visit students on placement in London. We had one student at the headquarters of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers (IME) by Green Park. There was a dress code in the Reform Club, which was that you must wear jacket and tie when in public rooms or areas. I used to travel in casual wear. After seeing the student at IME, I would visit their gents room, get changed into smart stuff, then leave for the Reform Club. The things a man does for a cause !

The meeting included members of various other groups including religious-based ones. There were usually about 12 of us, and they included the CG members, Roger Witcomb, Ian Kelly, Mark Thomas, myself, and people such as William and Cornelia Oddie, Roy Silver and Colin Hart of Christian Institute, Valerie Riches and Madeline Beard of Family and Youth Concern (FYC), Jamie and Joanna Bogle, Patricia Morgan, Bruce Lidington and Ian McKay of FNF, Stephen Green and Jennet Christie of Order of Christian Unity.

Colin Hart was based at Christian Institute’s office in Newcastle. We met for an Italian meal at the restaurant, then Italian, by the Carriage pub in Jesmond. We exchanged views, his being of the Christian sort. Colin kindly paid for the pizza.

It's difficult to assess the impact of our campaigning, but FLA96 was only partially implemented, as I've been told that : Part IV (occupation/non-molestation orders) was implemented and is current law; Part III (legal aid for mediation) was repealed by Access to Justice Act 1999; Part II (divorce & separation i.e. no-fault divorce) was never implemented and I believe it has been announced that it will be repealed; Part I (guiding principles for Parts II and III) may have been brought into force but irrelevant since II and III inoperative, and doubtless will be repealed when II is repealed.

### **Another men's group meeting**

John Champion thought we should attempt to bring some of the various men's groups together. We decided to organise a meeting in Cambridge, and it took place 10.30am-6.00pm on Saturday 18 January 1997. Brian Robertson booked a room at the Pike and Eel Hotel at Needingworth near Cambridge. Brian also gave me accommodation at his place near the centre of Cambridge. The whole thing was well organised by Brian, and about 30 came. And the Observer sent a journalist, Neil Lyndon, the one who had written *No More Sex War*. We had to ask him to be careful what to report, as there could be sensitive issues, things discussed that we didn't want the public to know about. I was to meet Neil later, about 2001, on a visit to Perth, Scotland, when we had a drink in the Greyfriars pub near one of the bridges, and exchanged news.

I acted as Secretary to the meeting. Roger Witcomb couldn't come, we were told he was ill. A number of initiatives were set up. We weren't going to have the chance to follow them up. Again, we showed that we needed to be better organised.

Neil Lyndon took an interest in all the meeting, and especially the ideas put forward for legal challenges under human rights laws and joint actions. He discussed these with Michael Pelling at some length.

One pleasant event took place. John Champion, who chaired the meeting, was to present tankards to Roger and me. I accepted mine for the work on *The Emperor's New Clothes*, but Roger had to receive his posthumously. It was months later presented by John to Roger's sister at the wake. Roger's sister was touched by the sentiment, and immediately burst into tears.

## **Individuals in the campaigns**

Some strong individuals stood out, and many were at the Pike and Eel meeting. They had their own cases, but had worked to understand and do something about the situation they faced. Some had been able to remedy their problems, many hadn't.

Oliver Cyriax was a lawyer in London who'd had a lot of problems with contact, not helped by the then court welfare service. He took a one-man campaign against the entire service, which he called INFORMATION on Probation Officers in Welfare Work (INPOWW). He'd realised how little training the officers had, how few guidelines they operated under. He documented the problems, and publicised them widely, never giving up. And his campaign may have contributed, if not led directly to the replacement of the court welfare service (CWS) with the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS). As he had a complaint, which I believe would certainly have been valid, with the Inner London CWS, he asked me to contact some members of the committee. He gave me their phone numbers. I contacted them in the role of an

investigating writer, and put them on the spot about their responsibilities. They denied problems and evaded the issues of course.

John Colthorpe was an apple farmer, I think in Norfolk. He told his story, and said he'd succeeded in suing the Lord Chancellor for not protecting his interests. He put the story in a book which he paid to have printed. It was called *Article 29 Magna Carta 15 June 1215 Runnymede* [10] and emphasised the link from present laws to the protections defined in this major step in English Law. Article 29 states that "no free man shall be taken or imprisoned or disseised or outlawed or exiled or in any way ruined, nor will we go or send against him, except by the lawful judgement of his peers or by the law of the land". The word 'disseised' isn't a mistake for 'deceased', it's an antiquated word meaning 'ousted or dispossessed of estate', so now you know. Unfortunately myself and John Campion just couldn't understand the detail in the book, as it was written in a style of its own.

And Michael Pelling is worth mentioning. He'd had the opportunity to study the law in depth. And had his own successes. He had, like myself, interests in human rights laws. He had advised a number of men through the East London branch of FNF. I'd visited one of their meetings at a social club on a Thursday evening while visiting London. One of Michael's cases is worth recalling. It was well known that only mothers receive the child benefit, even when the father has shared residence. Another active London man, Eugen Hockenjos, had shared residence. During 2002 and onwards Michael guided Eugen in going through the stages of UK law, with a view to taking the issue to the European Court. Apparently this was more appropriate than the European Court of Human Rights. At the time of writing, the case is still in progress, so I can't report the outcome yet.

Ivor Catt was a FNF member who'd studied the situation, and produced his own book. It's called *The Hook and the Sting* [11]. It pulls no punches. To quote from the back cover : "The English legal system is on the way out. This book shows how far it has disintegrated. The reasons for the collapse - Denning and then radical feminism - are discussed."

There were other outstanding men, including Brian Robertson of Cambridge, David Yarwood of Ascot, Paul Duddy of Glasgow, George McAulay also of Glasgow and who was close to Roger Witcomb in approach. And I could go on.

### **Other men's issues**

Other men's rights groups, with their own issues, have been established. Many were concerned for family law. Some specialised in specific areas.

There is NORM-UK, which is concerned about the involuntary circumcision of young men. This group has its own magazine and website. The magazine and website show the reaction by men to their treatment in this particular area.

One interesting development is the Internet radio programme, the *Men's Hour*. This was set up by Raymond Cuttill of Bracknell, Berkshire. It is a response to the BBC's *Women's Hour*, which has become progressively feminised over the years. The *Men's Hour* covers many men's rights issues, and is worth listening to, and has some significant contributions which we never hear of in the mainstream media.

## UK Men's Movement

The UKMM expanded. Ian Kelly amalgamated his organisation, DADs, into UKMM.

Unexpectedly, Roger Witcomb, only 52, got cancer in 1996. That's why he couldn't attend the Pike and Eel meeting. He died early the following year. In fact that day I phoned him, as I had occasionally done. A female answered the phone. It was Roger's sister, and she told me that Roger had died that morning.

Roger had always pretended that he'd be back at work and active again. As his sister said at the funeral and wake afterwards, Roger was in denial. I attended the funeral and we met at Roger's home, that I'd visited before, in which Roger had put me and Ian Kelly up the evening of the first CG meeting. John Champion was asked to give a eulogy. Here is it.

The eulogy given by Dr John Champion  
at Roger Witcomb's funeral

I am privileged to have been asked by Roger's family to say a few words about Roger from the viewpoint of the United Kingdom Men's Movement - an organisation of which he was the founder and chairman, and to which he devoted nearly all his non-working hours.

Roger was not comfortable with the title UK Men's Movement, but felt it had been forced on him by the need to defend the proper legal and human rights of decent men against attacks by feminist pressures. It was also forced on him by the media who wanted to speak of the 'men's movement' generally.

Roger was always at pains to stress that he (and the organisation) were not hostile to women but were only hostile to feminism. He did not believe that most women were feminists and did not believe that most women were well served by them. It was a great source of satisfaction that an increasing number of women were joining the UKMM – women of a high calibre and motivation.

Roger was not a practising Christian, but his own values and those he imbued the organisation with, were very much Christian ones. It was Roger, himself, despite pressure from more liberal elements, who insisted that the organisation take a clear moralist line on social issues and, for example, quite explicitly support traditional marriage and the family. Roger was therefore, ironically, often more comfortable with other Christian pro-family organisations that he was with more liberal men's organisations. It was largely due to Roger's efforts that we formed useful allies with such Christian groups in our campaigning against the Family Law Bill.

Roger's line was simple and direct. He did not believe in mincing words or avoiding plain home truths. You always knew which side he was on – even if you did not agree with him.

Roger was pro-life and did not believe in abortion – and he said so. He did not believe in divorce – and said so. He did not believe in the 'children's rights' movement – and said so. Most controversially of all, Roger believed in patriarchy as being the best model for the family because of its natural stabilising influences – and he said so.

Many of Roger's views on the family perhaps stemmed from the fact that circumstances had not permitted him to have children himself. I know this was a great sadness to him.



Roger was an elitist – not because he was a snob (he was very far from that) – but because he believed in the unashamed pursuit of excellence in all things. To him a university was a place consisting of ancient buildings, cloisters and lawns – not a 1960s college of concrete blocks. To him an engineer was someone wearing a suit and carrying a briefcase – not someone wearing overalls and wielding a spanner. He was constantly irritated by the media portrayal of science as to do with gadgets, test tubes and the like. Science to him was, above all, an intellectual discipline – a way of thinking and enquiring about the world.

Roger was a true scientist – not only in his work – but in his attitude to life generally. Like quality, truth to him was a precious and sacred thing. He had little time for the psychobabble of Psychologists and Sociologists – Pseudo Scientists as he called them. Gentleman that he was – Roger would always apologise to me for his barely concealed contempt for my own discipline – that of Psychology. Roger did not suffer fools gladly – but it was the charlatan and the intellectual seducer he despised – not the plainly ignorant honestly seeking the truth.

Roger was not impatient or unkind. If one phoned him after a bad media performance he would always be positive and supportive whilst acknowledging the weakness and encouraging one to do better next time. He would also be quick to identify a defect in his own performance which needed attention.

People may not have appreciated how completely unselfish Roger's project was. He knew that anything he achieved would make little difference to his own life. He did not even have his own children whose future he could be fighting for like some of us. He was driven, above all else, by a strong sense of fairness and justice.

Roger did not cut himself off in some enclave, as he might have done. He was keen to be out engaging in debate and influencing people. He was particularly keen

to discuss matters with young people. Nothing was too trivial for him - and he had to put up with some pretty dismal and insulting trivia from the media at times. One TV appearance he was pleased with, and had put himself out for, was an interview with a group of school-children who were doing a project on men's and women's roles. He was extremely pleased that Southampton University asked us to speak on a motion for their Debating Society as part of their men's week.

I think it was this steady inglorious and unrewarding plugging away at the grass roots that made me like and respect Roger more than anything else. It is easy to be a hero when you are a national figure - a star. But Roger was not a star - he was just an ordinary man who wanted to do his bit for society.

It was due largely to Roger's steady perseverance that the UKMM began to get greater recognition, and was represented centre-stage on BBC TV's Heart of the Matter and on Radio 4 with two separate programmes on the Moral Maze and two separate editions of Woman's Hour, as well as appearances on Channel 4 News and Newsnight. This, quite apart from innumerable local TV and radio station appearances. The movement had started to produce some serious research reports and had spoken to a number of Government ministers and had been asked to speak to the Law Commission.

Roger was undoubtedly compassionate, but he did not wear his heart on his sleeve and he could not abide sentiment. He felt deeply uncomfortable at a Kansas City conference at the sight of men crying over the loss of their much-loved children - however much he felt sympathy for them. He stood for the classic male virtues of directness, stoicism and courage - and he lived his own life according to these.

When Roger heard that he was terminally ill with cancer, his attitude was to face the truth, get done with the treatment and then get on with his life and get on with the fight as before as best he could. He told me, not so

long ago, that he was looking to try and get another ten years in. I told him - he'd better - because we certainly couldn't do to without him.

Well, tragically Roger didn't get another ten years in and we *will* have to do without him. It won't be easy. With the death also of Bruce Lidington of the charity Families Need Fathers, the men's movements have suffered two severe blows at a time when they can least afford it.

But if anything should stand as a permanent memorial to Roger it is surely the UK Men's Movement, and it must be our duty to keep it going and, importantly, hold it to the values that Roger imbued it with. We must follow his example of modest, steady determination and do our little bit to help create a slightly better world for our children to grow up in.

After the church service, John went to the graveyard to see Roger buried. I had to get the train back to Newcastle as my children were staying with me at the time.

## **John Champion offered Chair of UKMM**

Ian Kelly asked John Champion to be Chair of UKMM. John phoned me to see if he'd get my support and for suggestions. I planned to go south the following day anyway, so left early for a discussion. I reminded John of the hassle he might have, but gave him my support. John took over, and started to organise things on a more professional level. For example we had an AGM at Imperial College, London at which about 35 attended. And NC meetings took place at the Charing Cross Hotel. John had financial support from a well-off supporter of the CG.

One of our acquaintances was Valerie Riches. She was then Chair of Family and Youth Concern (FYC). She invited John Campion to join FYC, initially as her deputy. John thought this a great opportunity to campaign full time. But they didn't get on, or had policy differences, and within a year John left. He didn't return to UKMM Chair however as he had to find work again.

Roger Witcomb had left the UKMM £40,000 in his will. This would transform the organisation. We planned to spend it on a publicity campaign using a professional PR company, and approached two of them. But some members of UKMM NC were against, so that didn't happen. New and upgraded PCs were obtained, and we could afford copying of reports, and visits to conferences.

While John was with FYC, I was still operating using the CG name for certain purposes. As John couldn't be CG Director, at this time, by invitation of Valerie Riches, and for a specific purpose, I assumed that role.

There was a by-election at Beckenham in 1997. John had been raised in Beckenham, and decided to stand on a platform for personal and social responsibility. He asked for suggestions for the party name. John chose Social Foundation Party, and his leaflets emphasised social responsibility of individuals with state support in terms of policies and laws for this objective. He obtained a grand total of 64 votes. It was obvious that the individual needs lots of dosh to run a campaign. I think it cost John about £3,500. I went there one Sunday, to help deliver leaflets, as his campaign manager had planned using maps of the area.

John made attempts to engage in debate through the usual channels, on advisory committees and so on, without much success. Most members of such groups, for example in the LCD, are usually

hostile to anyone mentioning men's rights. John did however present a paper at an academic conference at Stafford University on 21 January 1998, with Brian Robertson and myself in attendance as support. Also there was the then senior guardian ad litem, who raised his eyebrows at some of the content of John's paper. During the debate that followed the presentation of John's paper, it appeared that his ideas were not being taken at all seriously by some present. In view of the lack of respect given, John collected his paperwork and stormed out of the room and back to the station, soon followed by Brian and myself.

### **Other campaigning groups**

As well as the men's and fathers' rights groups that I'd already encountered, there were others concerned for separate or related issues in law.

For example there was the Litigants In Person Society or LIPS. A 'litigant in person' is the legal term for someone who acts for or represents themselves in a court case. They were able to offer advice for anyone who'd had enough of solicitors and barristers, or who just couldn't afford them. I'd come across them at a FNF meeting. A related group that I'd been told about was the National Council for Access to Law. I've no idea how they are progressing.

And there was the Campaign for a Fair Hearing (CFAFH). This was a group led by Suzon Forcey-Moore in Cambridge. I attended one of their meetings on a Sunday at a venue in London. I met some very angry people. They were angry about a number of areas of law in which they felt they hadn't been treated correctly. Some of them were men concerned with family law, but maybe hadn't heard of the fathers' groups. One of these was a man called Brian, and I

won't give his surname. He'd been a successful businessman, but was now very bitter. He told a story about his ex-wife having an affair with her barrister, and the two of them had contrived to deprive Brian of his money. There's a certificate on my wall confirming that the Cheltenham Group was a founding member of the CFAFH. However, as with some other groups, I haven't had time to keep in touch with them, so don't know what they have subsequently achieved.

Another group that I'd become aware of was the Grandparents Federation. This is a group which represents grandparents cut off from their grandchildren due to separation of their son or daughter. The local organiser, who also had a national role, was Philomena O'Malley. She invited me, as a prominent fathers' rights campaigner, to join one of their meetings. Their next meeting was on Saturday 14 June 1997, which I attended that evening, at Gateshead Town Hall, the new red brick one not the old. There were quite a few people there, more than we normally had for the local FNF meetings of fathers. There were perhaps 40 people, mainly in couples. I wondered how they had managed to be better organised than local fathers. Philomena led the discussion. There were some introductions, including myself, some background about campaigning and encouraging those attending to contact their MP. At one stage Philomena asked each person to briefly tell us their problems, going round the room. I distinctly remember that in every case, the grandparent or grandparent couple had not seen their grandchildren for some time. And in every single case the obstruction had come from a woman. Their previous daughter-in-law. Not a son-in-law. They were parents of a son who was in most cases, but not all, also suffering obstructed contact. They usually understood their son's problems, and the knock-on effect on themselves. It was usually a case of their son's contact was obstructed, and their own at the same time. I was

introduced and allowed to speak. I told of fathers' perspectives about what was going on, how men were treated and the lack of remedies. I also pointed out to them that feminism had gone too far, and that in all the cases we heard that evening, it was a woman who had created their problem. This didn't seem to go down very well. I suppose this older generation weren't used to anyone criticising women. Probably, they still had a great deal of chivalry towards women. And even when it was clear that many women, women they presumably knew well, as they were their son's ex-wives, were behaving unreasonably, they still felt that they should show respect towards these women.

## **Publications**

One of the CESPAs members, David Yarwood of Ascot, was known to me since I briefly attended a CESPAs AGM in Newcastle, maybe around 1993. David had sent occasional information to me, press cuttings and news of CESPAs work. He was expert in the social security area, especially as it affected men in the 60-64 age range. Men of this age don't get the same benefits as women, who are state pensioners while men aren't. The law has now been changed, so that women will not receive the state pension until 65 years old. But this will not come into effect until about 2025, another generation away.

On one occasion David sent me a copy of a brief report he'd sent to his MP. It was only 4 sides, but it listed all the discriminations he knew against men. I hadn't seen this done before, mainly because for the last 30-40 years, we've all continuously been told how badly done-by women are. David only had a slight familiarity with the family law area. I realised I could add to his list quite significantly. And that by also expanding on the information available, we

would have a booklet. I categorised all the discriminations, added the family area, and one or two others that I knew of, such as women-only facilities, and put together the UKMM publication *Discrimination Against Men in the UK* [15]. David was initially reluctant to help with the booklet, but did later when it was updated.

## **Media appearances and meeting hostility**

I was asked by BBC Radio Newcastle to do an interview, maybe about 1991 or 1992. I've been asked back fairly regularly until about 2000, after which only infrequently.

But you get to know some of the presenters and researchers, and they get to know you. I'd regularly been on the Mike Parr show on BBC Radio Newcastle, so he's familiar with my opinions.

After one of the Radio Newcastle programmes, maybe in the evening, I listened to the following phone-ins as I drove home in my car. A young woman had phoned in to comment. She said, about me, "he's a bit of a nutter isn't he?". The presenter then said something to the effect of "be careful, he may be listening". So the women were happy to describe me as a 'nutter'. Is that a slanderous statement?

And there were invitations on national radio. Radio 5 did a discussion programme, with a panel in London chaired by Carol Malone, me in Newcastle by ISDN line. Nicky Campbell, with whom I'd also been, I think, on Radio 5, remembered me when I met him at Carlton Studios in Nottingham. And a few other television events. On one occasion, a French television crew visited Eric Bel, a French chap who teaches at Teesside University, and



myself. I believe it would have appeared on French cable television, but I wasn't able to see it for obvious reasons.

There have been incidents of considerable hostility in these media appearances. All those in the men's rights groups who take part in them are aware. I was twice on a discussion programme on BBC Radio Newcastle called The Zoo, hosted by Mike Parr, a regular presenter. On one occasion, also on was Brian McKenzie, previously a senior police officer in Co. Durham, and now in the House of Lords. Mike asked me about men's rights in the family. I said, as usual that we wanted a fair deal. Brian McKenzie seemed to take a dim view of any man asking for fair rights, and used the word "taliban" with regard to me. On air I mean. But I'd seen it before.

It's interesting to consider if these media activities, and the hassle involved, is worth it. But if we in the men's movement don't speak up, no one else will.

Hostile responses were known in written correspondence. While on the National Council of FNF, I'd had some correspondence in 1994 with various MPs and others. I'd sent a number of them briefing material about family law. One of them was Glenda Jackson, the actress now a MP, who responded a letter firmly against us.

GLEENDA JACKSON, M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

071-219 4008

Barry Worrall  
National Council Families Need Fathers

15 July 1994

Dear Mr Worrall,

I acknowledge receipt of your letter and enclosures dated 12 July 1994.

I'm sure that you will be aware of the case of M [redacted] and her daughter V given that your organisation encouraged her ex-partner, B [redacted] to snatch his daughter. In order to take V Mr [redacted] was violent towards Ms [redacted] and left her tied, with wire, to a radiator. After mounting a publicity campaign, with which I assisted, V was eventually returned from abroad to her mother.

I have read the draft of your Mission Statement and found it to be an attack on women rather than an argument for "keeping children and parents in contact" which your letterhead says is Families Need Fathers' aim.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Glenda Jackson".

GLEENDA JACKSON MP

cc. Oliver Heald MP  
Joan Lester MP

While she comments on a specific case, she regards the policy paper that we'd sent, which included a request for equal treatment for men, with the comment that what we asked for was "an attack on women". So we have a culture in which any man asking for equal rights may be readily accused of "attacking" others.

## **Some human rights challenges**

Aware of the possibility that others could be using human rights laws, I did some investigation, and have tried to keep up to date since. The website of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has information about ongoing and completed cases, with a useful purpose-made search facility, which allows specific topics to be looked up. The information includes full copies of the Court's judgements. And I also began to receive information from others about challenges that were being made.

The most prominent successful cases, with their outcomes and the implications for others, are :

Hokkanen v. Finland in 1994 : a father cut off from his daughter for 3 years wins 100,000 Markka (about £11,000) compensation under Article 8 (respect for family life and no interference by authority).

Van Raalte v. The Netherlands in 1997 : in The Netherlands, unmarried childless men over 45 were required to pay into a child benefit scheme, but of course women in the same situation were not required to pay. Mr Van Raalte won his case at the European Court of Human Rights under Article 1 of Protocol 1 (enjoyment of possessions) combined with Article 14 (discrimination). He did not obtain any compensation, despite obvious costs to himself.

Willis v. UK in 1999 : Kevin Willis of Bristol, looking after his children after his wife died at the age of only 39, was denied widower's benefits equivalent to widow's. He won his case after the UK government chose not to contest. I'm not aware that the UK government has changed the rules however, so others may need to make individual complaints.

Elsholz v. Germany in 2000 : a story from Germany, with the usual deliberate cutting-off of a father from his son by the mother, and no action taken by the corrupt and degenerate courts. But this time the father went to Strasbourg and had 'just satisfaction' of DM35,000 (about £11,000), and costs of about DM12,000 (about £4,000). An interesting aspect of the judgement is that the Court referred to Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS), probably the first occasion that ECHR has done so, and clearly an encouraging sign.

All men who have had no remedy to obstructed contact, discriminatory social security provisions, or similar issues, should apply under HRA98 and if necessary to the ECHR under the same or other appropriate articles, quoting these cases, and asking for compensation.

## **Other legal challenges**

There were those who had noted what was going on, and the malpractices involved, and then made legal challenges. With email communications going on, we knew what others were doing. For example in the USA, some used the expression 'no due process of law', meaning that the normal processes which should apply just didn't, leaving men helpless. While lawyers should be making these challenges on behalf of their male clients, they didn't. So the men

were often forced to do it themselves, and were making constitutional challenges.

## **New groups emerging**

The initial activities of a new group, Fathers 4 Justice (F4J), starting in 2003, focussed on direct action and civil disobedience. They had stormed a High Court in Holborn London, and had mounted several media-catching stunts. Some members found themselves on the receiving end of the law. In 2003 Shaun O'Connell, on trial for some minor offence during campaigning, asked for but was refused a trial by jury. He took the trouble to collect accounts from others to submit as evidence about the general situation. This was to be submitted to the court as part of his case, due to be heard 23-26 February 2004. I offered to be one of the witnesses, and using Cheltenham Group reports, to describe the general situation. The judge blocked this type of evidence. Men were beginning to get serious.

## **A submission to the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UN HRC)**

I still had hopes that human rights laws could and should be applied to bring significant change to the fundamental principles of family law. I had documentation from ECHR and the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UN HRC) in Geneva, and was familiar with the major codes in human rights, and most of the pathways available for remedy with the UK. At this time, 1999, the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA98) had not yet come into effect.

It isn't possible for any UK person to apply to the UN, as the UK hasn't ratified the 'optional protocol' covering this. But it is possible to make a submission about a general situation in the UK, under the UN's '1503' procedure.

Having now lots of evidence and statistics in *The Emperor's New Clothes*, I decided to make a submission. I carefully analysed the distinction between marriage and cohabitation, and the legal support for entering marriage. No one to my knowledge had ever done this before, or since. You may read the conclusions yourself, including the summary below. The UN code called the International Covenant on Civil and Political Right (UN ICCPR) provides the right to marry under article 23. The submission questioned whether there was actually a state of being 'married' in any legal sense in the UK. This is not far fetched, as the laws relating to marriage, especially for men, essentially give no support, in fact open up men to clear violations of their lives which they wouldn't suffer if they remained unmarried. The submission was titled *Submission to the United Nations Human Rights Commission : Violations of Articles 23 & 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) by the United Kingdom (UK)* [3], and was accompanied by a copy of the report *The Emperor's New Clothes*.

The analysis is quite detailed, but the situation can be summarised. Essentially, marriage has no legal significance for men, in the sense of benefits and providing protection when things go wrong. It has some significance for women, as there are welfare benefits to be obtained on the death of the man, and legal protections. If marriage, for a man, can't be distinguished from non-marriage in terms of the law and benefits, then it doesn't exist, or exists in name only. The summary is from the submission :

## Summary

In the UK, matrimonial and family law, and the social benefits for marriage, have been the subject of many rapid changes since 1948. Various minority interest groups have had a significant influence on this situation, most of them against the normal family and particularly men's rights within the family.

The Cheltenham Group has studied the current situation, and has conducted a survey of men's experience of the process and consequences of divorce, and published the results.

The Group has also made a comparison of the benefits of the married state with that of cohabitation, and of the benefits for men and women. This comparison shows that :

- for a married man continuing to live with a partner, marriage is not a distinguishable state, as there are no benefits over cohabitation;
- for a married woman continuing to live with a partner there are benefits over cohabitation, but only obtained on the death of the man;
- for a married man whose marriage ends in divorce, there is usually more serious damage to his life than if he had cohabited. For those married fathers with children, the damage is very serious. Marriage for men therefore usually constitutes a more damaging state than cohabitation, whether children are involved or not, but is especially damaging for the man with children;
- for a married woman whose marriage ends in divorce, there are considerable benefits compared with cohabitation, and these benefits are obtained due to damage to a man's life.

Approximately 50% of marriages end in divorce in the UK in the 1990s, and the man contemplating marriage must base his decisions on this fact.

Those who drafted the ICCPR including Article 23(2), granting that the 'right of men and women to marry shall be recognized' must have done so on the understanding that the step 'to marry' would :

- result in the individual being in a distinguishable state from cohabitation;
- and that it would provide the individual with certain rights and protections not available in cohabitation.

Depending on the outcome therefore, marriage is for men either not a distinguishable state from cohabitation, or is seriously damaging to his life; for women, either not a distinguishable state from cohabitation, or provides significant benefits. Further, the process and consequence of divorce is usually seriously degrading for men.

This situation is not compatible with the provisions of Articles 23(2), 23(4) and 7 of ICCPR.

The UK is violating Article 23(2) in about 360,000 cases each year, and Articles 23(4) and 7 in about 100,000 cases each year.

Domestic remedies are usually not available for men in the UK, either acting as individuals in their cases, or as a group in making submissions to the relevant authorities.

This submission is made in order to obtain radical change to UK laws, to ensure measures are introduced to prevent repetition of this situation, and to obtain compensation for those men affected.



The detailed analysis is available in the report. Perhaps it's too detailed for most purposes. But it's worth giving an extract, as an indication of the detailed comparisons, available in this table, also taken from the submission :

Summary of comparison of benefits/damages for women and men

Only differences for women and men are shown.

situation/ outcome	for women	for men
While the couple are living together, without or with children applies to about 50% of couples	Marriage is of benefit to women, due to the existence of widow's benefits for those women aged 45+, value £1,000 lump sum and £3,364.40 pa thereafter. For the benefit to be obtained, the man must die first.	Marriage is not of benefit to men.
After separation, without children applies to about 10% of couples	Marriage usually ensures a greater share of assets at divorce.  Married women have the possibility of ex-spouse	Marriage usually ensures a greater loss of assets at divorce.  Married men have the possibility of being forced to pay ex-spouse

	<p>maintenance with an average value of £5,400 pa.</p>	<p>maintenance with an average value of £5,400 pa.</p>
<p>After separation, with children</p>	<p>Women are usually treated with considerable privileges, and have the assurance that they will be 'protected', whether they were married or not.</p>	<p>Married men usually suffer much abuse and degrading treatment, especially over children.</p>
<p>applies to about 40% of couples</p>	<p>Marriage usually ensures a gain in assets with an average value of about £20,000.</p>	<p>Marriage usually ensures a loss in assets with an average value of about £20,000.</p>
	<p>Married women have the possibility of ex-spouse maintenance with an average value of £5,400 pa.</p>	<p>Married men have the possibility of being forced to pay ex-spouse maintenance with an average value of £5,400 pa.</p>

After receiving the submission, the UN people quickly replied, and asked for 7 more copies to be sent. They seem to have taken some notice. The extra copies of the submission, and of the report, cost

about £120, the postage about £30, so just sending the extra copies to Geneva cost about £150. The UKMM could afford this.

It's a pity that the submission couldn't be sent to every MP in the country. But it's important to realise that the cost of doing such things are high. Just to place a copy of such a report before all MPs would cost a few thousand pounds. Typical reports cost about £3 - £4 for reprographics and binding. A covering letter, envelope and postage adds almost another £1. So a copy to one MP costs nearly £5. With 659 MPs, or thereabouts, that's about £3,250. Then there is any follow-up activity. Until you've been involved, it's easy for ordinary folk to understand that even simple political activity, such as this type of lobbying, costs a lot of dosh.

I sent a copy of the UN submission to Valerie Riches, who was just about to go to a conference in Rome. She was so enthused that she had copies made and distributed to the Pontifical Council, whatever that is. The Pope later had things to say. I don't know if the report influenced him, but it may have added to the information he had.

This was reported by Reuters press agency in March 2002 :  
reference

[http://www.reuters.com/news\\_article.jhtml?type=topnews&StoryID=549766](http://www.reuters.com/news_article.jhtml?type=topnews&StoryID=549766)

VATICAN CITY (Reuters) - Pope John Paul urged magistrates and lawyers Monday to avoid working on divorce cases, which he described as 'spreading like the plague.'

The Pope, spiritual leader of about one billion Catholics around the world, sent his warning to the legal profession during an annual meeting with Vatican

magistrates. 'Marriage is indissoluble ... it doesn't make any sense to talk about the 'imposition' of human law, because it should reflect and protect natural and divine law,' the Pope said. '(Divorce) ... has devastating consequences that spread in society like the plague.' As a result, judges and lawyers should refuse to use their professional skills with the goal of ending marriages, he said. 'Lawyers, who work freely, should always decline to use their professions for an end that is contrary to justice, like divorce,' the 81-year-old Pope said. While magistrates may find it more difficult to avoid being assigned marriage cases, the Pope said they must strive to prevent divorce. 'Those working in civil law cases should avoid being personally involved in what could be understood as cooperating in divorce...they should look for effective measures to favor marriage, above all mediating conciliation,' he said.

The Catholic Church is vehemently opposed to divorce and homosexual unions which it says threaten the 'natural institution' of the family.

Information about, and a copy of, the UN submission were placed on websites. Soon after, others around the world contacted me. I had a phone call from New Jersey USA, and emails from a Canadian group, all wanting to know if they would be able to make similar submissions about the situation in their own countries. Some countries have signed the 'optional protocol' which allows individuals to take their cases to court in the UN, although the UK has not. And some individuals in those countries which have signed up to the protocol may have done this now. As it happens, I haven't heard what they did, or what the outcomes were. I don't have the resources to keep in touch with so many people and follow all their activities.

## **A second personal application to ECHR, Strasbourg**

As my personal situation could be used with the same argument and evidence as the UN submission under ICCPR articles 23 and 7, I made another application to the ECHR. It was made under their equivalent articles in the European Convention, that is, articles 12 and 3. ECHR turned it down without giving reasons.

### **Some further initiatives under the CG name**

In 1997 we became aware of a policy which caused us great anger. It was called the *NAPO Anti-sexism Policy*. It's worth describing. NAPO is the National Association of Probation Officers. It is the trade union or professional body of court welfare officers, who were the predecessors of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) officers. The policy is clearly intended to remove men's rights by subversion of the law. And these officers are in very sensitive positions in the law.

Here is a facsimile of the relevant section of the policy (from page 11) :

## **2. The Family Court System**

- (a) To develop and promote policies and strategies which strengthen and enhance the ability of women to make and carry out choices within separating families.
- (b) To develop and implement policies and strategies which challenge the experience of oppression of all women in separating families.
- (c) To support the rights of lesbians as mothers and carers.
- (d) To develop policies and strategies which challenge the discrimination against women in contested residence and contact decisions.
- (e) To develop policies and strategies which challenge and redress racism in the family court system, and discrimination on grounds of race in separating families.
- (f) To develop and promote training strategies which strengthen the anti discriminatory perspective of family court work.

11

Elsewhere the policy notes that in the court welfare officer's work :

There is potential for collusion in home making and peacemaking by the women without ensuring that men share equally in these roles. Family Court work is an important opportunity to build on the strengths and the expansion of women's roles.

We can very clearly see the objectives of the authors of this policy.

I made attempts at a remedy with submissions to the relevant authorities during 1998. There was a complete lack of remedy from

the competent authorities, as described in our publication *The NAPO 'Anti-sexism' Policy & Lack of Available Remedies*, of 1998 [2].

The manipulation of evidence in a legal case is 'perversion of the course of justice'. So the application of this policy by a CAFCASS officer in an individual case would surely be this criminal offence. So, later, in 2002, I referred the case to the police. The police were reluctant to act, but after a meeting with Chief Superintendent Alan Nichol of Northumbria Police's Criminal Justice Department, the case was referred to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The CPS refused to act, saying "the policy statement ... does not as a matter of law amount to a criminal offence". I've noticed more than once that most of the CPS staff appear to be female.

In April 2001 a new body, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) replaced the old court welfare service. The officers of CAFCASS still belong in many cases to NAPO. At a consultation conference that I attended in Manchester in 2002, in an open conference session, I asked Anthony Hewson, then Chair of CAFCASS, if he knew of the NAPO policy, and what he intended to do about it. He passed the issue to Jonathan Tross, one of his colleagues in CAFCASS. Tross explained they accepted the policy as part of their 'diversity' policy. This response was totally unsatisfactory of course. Later, in a group session, I told Hewson I'd contact him about it. I did write, and received an evasive answer. CAFCASS was going to do nothing about this subversive policy.

Soon after we learned about the NAPO policy, John Campion obtained a meeting at the Lord Chancellor's Department, to explain to them our concerns. Geoff Hoon was a junior minister then, and we met him with two assistants. It was at 11.30am on Thursday 11 June 1998 in Selborne House, 54-60 Victoria Street,

London, SW1E 6QW. The agenda of the meeting was to present Hoon with information on the NAPO policy, and the general situation. Hoon was given copies of *The Emperor's New Clothes*, and *The NAPO 'Anti-sexism' Policy & Lack of Available Remedies*.

Hoon said that the policy of a trade union would have no effect on the practices of its members and hence on the interpretation of the law, as most people are legally represented in their cases. It is understood that the implication is that this representation would prevent any problems, yet it is clear from the CG's NAPO report [2] that both the Law Society and the Bar Council have accepted no responsibility for the NAPO policy or for their members' duties to their clients with respect to this. Hoon also said that he had personal experience of family law as a barrister and had lectured on the subject. His opinion was that the law was correctly interpreted. He specifically said that : the Cheltenham Group did not, with 'only' 350 cases analysed, have substantive evidence of any problems, and he said this before he had even read the reports he had just received; the Cheltenham Group members present could not objectively assess evidence; women were 'economically disadvantaged'. Hoon constantly denied any problems in the interpretation of the law but repeated the formal position as stated in the written law. He also said that marriage conveyed rights on fathers which unmarried fathers did not have. When asked what these rights were he stated the provisions of the written law, e.g. it was possible to apply to court under 'parental responsibility'. He was shown the probability of various outcomes of marriage and divorce in annex 3 of *The Emperor's New Clothes* [1], and asked if his Department had better information. He stated that it was not necessary that this information be collected by his Department and that the burden was on the CG to provide evidence. He was asked if he would look at further evidence if submitted. He replied, 'yes' in principle, but would not be drawn to state how much evidence



would be required. The meeting ended with no commitment by Hoon to take any action over the NAPO policy or the situation generally.

When we got into the lift John commented on Hoon. For fear of libel action, I won't say what John said about him.

## **Media hostility**

In 1999 both *The Times* and *The Independent on Sunday* newspapers phoned me for an interview within a few days of each other.

The resulting article in *The Times* of Saturday 4 December 1999 was headed "Villainous women are waging war on us" as a quotation of myself. A number of issues were described out of context and out of proportion. And the journalist brought in opinions from feminists rather than from the public. One quotation from Susan Faludi about us was : "They have no meaningful role, their work has no connection to the larger social purpose". As usual the word 'misogyny' appeared, as any man asking for a fair deal with women is almost automatically branded with that label in media reports.

Soon after, on 12 December, *The Independent on Sunday* article appeared. At least this was more balanced, and didn't include opinions from any feminists. Under the heading "Men try to overturn divorce law" it referred to the UN submission as an "audacious attempt" to achieve this. However, there was no investigation or assessment about the evidence and argument used in the UN submission, even though these were readily available to all on websites, and available to the journalist who wrote the

article, Nicholas Pike. It may be that such an assessment of the facts could have been far more interesting for the paper's readers, and could readily have started a national discussion, or at least a debate in the paper's pages

*The Times* article was so disrespectful and contained so many untruths that I made a complaint to the Press Complaints Commission. They did nothing about *The Times*.

## Looking after websites

Everyone in the men's rights groups understands the need for publicity. So the Internet, both email communications and website publicity, is important.

I'd added a 'name and shame' section to the UKMM website. One of those 'named and shamed' was to be my first solicitor. Within a few weeks of an article appearing on the website, these solicitors contacted our Internet Service Provider (ISP), and asked them to not just remove the offending article, but to close down the whole site. Here's the email they sent to our ISP :

Dear Sir or Madam,

You are hosting the website of the United Kingdom Men's Movement. It is currently publishing an article titled 'Mrs - - and District Judge Bullock'. This is highly defamatory of Mrs -, a partner in the firm of - - Solicitors, and of the firm itself. Please view at -. Please confirm that you will remove the website immediately, failing which, we will hold you liable for the continuing publication of the defamatory material.

Yours faithfully

-----.

I'd like to know who tipped them off about the article. Someone's obviously watching.

It wasn't prudent to leave the article there, as a legal attack could be a very costly and stressful business.

I'm reminded of a comparable example. I once saw a television interview of a journalist who had had knowledge of Robert Maxwell's manipulations of his newspaper company's pension fund. The journalist said that everyone knew what Maxwell was doing, but didn't dare publish in case he attacked them via the laws on defamation.

It is quite clear that the laws of defamation in the UK are oppressive, and are preventing many truths coming out. They protect wealthy villains, but don't protect good men of limited means.

## **A split**

Some new faces appeared on UKMM NC, Mark Fletcher and Steve Fitzgerald especially. And Robert Whiston acted as Chair when Ian Kelly was late for a meeting one day. Unfortunately this clique wanted to change roles. And they wanted to change the name to ManKind. There was an unpleasant period before some of the original UKMM people were either expelled or resigned.

So we ended up with two separate groups. But ManKind kept Roger's money, of which there was about £23,000 left at the time. And we kept the website. We were furious that Roger had left his money to UKMM, which still existed, but the money was owned by another group.

This episode was simply the latest in many cases that I'd seen or knew of, about men not working together for their common good.

### **Further understanding**

There had been a number of initiatives within the groups to tackle MPs and ministers, and to spread the word via media appearances. And a number of people had attended conferences organised by various bodies, such as the Lord Chancellor's Department. The hostility and the attitudes of those attending is worth describing.

I remember Roger Witcomb telling the story of how he'd been hit by some woman after a television show. And there was the occasion when Radio Newcastle asked a feminist to leave the studio by a different door from me after the broadcast, in case she hit me I think. And the verbal abuse from some feminist at a CAFCASS conference in Manchester which I attended in 2002. And personal insults from another feminist on leaving a television studio in Glasgow.

**An invitation to a debate at the University of Kent at  
Canterbury, *Has feminism gone too far ?*, at 7.30pm on  
8 March 2001**

Someone at this university, it may have been the women's officer, which most university student's unions have, invited someone from UKMM to propose and defend this motion. I was elected to go.

The scenario : I'm the proposer of the motion 'Has feminism gone too far ?', and the opposer is Prof Mary Evans, Head of the Women's Studies Centre. The Chair was Linda Kean, Head of some college i.e. both senior people. So they took us seriously. The audience, 33 of them, was mainly women students on the women's studies courses, but only a few men, including one who said he'd been married to a feminist for 35 years.

William Coulson, a UKMM member who was later to edit the magazine, hoped to attend as an observer, but was unable to make it due to various events, so I had no support at all. I think I acquitted myself fine however.

As I told them, my case was simple : men are discriminated against in all areas of life, so there's no rationale for feminism. I went through the sections of the UKMM booklet *Discrimination Against Men in the UK* (DAMUK) i.e. the areas of discrimination. Then asked why feminism, Minister for Women, EOC, etc, etc, etc, and what lunacy is going on ?

The debate format was formal : 20 minutes for myself, 20 minutes for Mary. Then 3 minutes maximum for anyone from the floor. Most spoke, and against what I'd said, disbelief mainly. Then 10 minutes Mary summarised her case, then 10 minutes for myself.

I wasn't allowed to respond to points from the floor as they were made, so, despite making notes, couldn't respond to them all in my summary.

It was appalling to see young minds full of such nonsense. When I was their age I was going fishing for trout as many Saturdays as I could, with other such ordinary activities, and never gave such things any thought. They were just unpleasant aspects of life that I wanted no part of. What has happened to this country ?

The voting, taken before and after, was this. Before : for 1, against 15, abstentions 10. After : for 0, against 18, abstentions 9. So I lost the vote, and even lost the one 'for' vote. Despite having no support, I think I put the case across well enough however. But with the audience of that composition, I don't think a nuclear explosion going off in the lecture room would have moved such people.

Being told about discrimination against men, their reaction was one of disbelief. The facial expressions during my presentation were clear, they were aghast at the ideas. The comments after were hostile, but without any rationale, and not based on facts. All this indicated their lack of openness to new ideas.

When I described the discrimination against men in the state pension, some woman in the audience said "oh yes, I've heard of that". Merely heard of it ? Does not accept it as fact ? Ever considered any other discrimination against men ? These people appeared never to have really studied the subject of discrimination, on which they base the fundamentals of their philosophy. You wonder what is studied in the 'women's studies' departments of our universities. We've had decades of being told that women are discriminated against. It illustrates the concept

that, if something is repeated often enough, no matter how ridiculous it is, people will accept it as fact.

Mary was very polished, and never replied to any points I'd made, just the usual stuff about the suffragette struggle, then about a reaction to progress, then women taking more control and making decisions, and the old domestic violence against women ploy was used as well.

I was able to make notes of the points she made, but, because of the format of the debate, couldn't respond to them all. Notable amongst them, my responses would have been :

Mary Evans' point

A response

There are legitimate issues on which women should organise.

Why do they need to organise when they are amongst the most privileged group of any on Earth ?

One of the benefits is that women will have more responsibility.

I only wish they did have more, for other people that is.

We should allocate resources and we should control the debate.

Why should women control the debate, this indicates an intent of tyranny. Presumably she would deny us men any resources at all.

In a sense feminism can never go too far.

It already has. In what sense can it not go too far ?

I think they were just people who had been fed falsehood after falsehood, and had never once stopped to even consider men's position. They appear to be stuck in a mental block, to have no minds left of their own. We seem to be dealing here with fanatics with fixed minds, who will not respond to facts or reason.

Let's put ourselves in Mary's position : she'd been at this for 20 years. Could she now admit to herself some if not most of it was nonsense ? I remember a report during the Gorbachev Russian revolution, maybe in 1990, that a General had thrown himself off the balcony of his flat when he realised communism was being overturned. He couldn't cope, with what he'd believed in and worked for, for 50 years, suddenly being overturned.

I think it will have raised questions in their minds, but those minds are so blocked. Unless we get more exposure in the media, we can't convince most people of what is going on here. The Internet is not controlled by them fortunately. There are about 100 universities in the UK, where this nonsense is going on. I may not have affected even this one, but maybe made them think.

We were all invited to the college bar after the debate. Mary Evans didn't want to, so I had a drink with a few students who were friendly enough. I took 80 copies of my handout and all took one coming into the lecture theatre, and gave one leaflet to a male student in the bar afterwards.

I was told that the debate had been advertised widely on notice boards etc, but couldn't find any advert on the notice board in the entrance to the college where the debate took place. Perhaps it was only 'widely' advertised in the Women's Studies Centre. The young men I met weren't interested. But then they have no experience to make decisions on. Most have been to school, then direct to a place



at university, so have never been affected by the issues of concern. Although you'd think that some would have seen what happened to their fathers, brothers, friends, etc.

With my science and technology background, where facts and logical argument are essential, I find it shocking to see opinions based on little or no evidence. And opinions are all that exist, not facts. Weird and bizarre opinions to a scientist and technologist. We all know that this is what's been going on for 30 years, but when it's seen first-hand, and from a professor at a UK university, it drives it home. She'll be on a salary of about £45,000 pa as well.

One thing the UKMM should be proud of is that the facts have been put down in the booklet *Discrimination Against Men in the UK*, so can be quoted readily. No other group in the world has done that.

Wider questions exist of course. Such as : why are universities, supposed to be about research and teaching, used for gender political campaigning ? And why are we taxpayers required to fund this ? It is outrageous that many of the 100 or so universities in the UK are being used in this way.

## **Campus feminism generally**

Other examples of campus feminism, beyond the women's studies departments are only too easily seen.

Without giving the sources, I can report examples of comments and incidents regarding female academic staff, that have been reported among the men's groups.

In my own university, referring to myself, after I'd forgotten something : "you can't blame that on what happened to you a few years ago" i.e. referring to my case, was very offensive.

Reported from others are a variety of comments and situations illustrative of the culture.

In discussing men's activities : "boys join football clubs to network with other men". About a student : "I could smell the testosterone on him". To a female student : "I've been very happily divorced now for 26 years" must surely send a message to impressionable young women.

A male student was being mistreated by his girlfriend, who was pregnant but causing him a great deal of anguish over this. So much anguish, that it was affecting his studies to an extent that he visited a course tutor for help. The tutor told him that he should not expect pregnant women to behave in a logical or rational manner. No help or suggestion for remedy were offered. The implication being that he just had to put up with it.

We hear of social events for female students, coffee mornings and so on, not available to male students. Many 'women returner' and 'women only' courses are offered across the country. And the students are even in some cases provided their travelling expenses to and from the university. And I could go on.

## **World-wide information via the Internet**

The amount of networking with other men's rights groups, all across the Western World and beyond, is significant. We are all

aware about the situation both within our own countries and overseas.

Before the Net was available, I once sent a bundle of letters and magazines to Australia. It cost £5 odd. Now it would cost let's say about 0.5p via an email. One thousandth of the cost.

It's interesting to see other initiatives. Here's one example, received by email in December 2002 :

<http://www.newswire.ca/releases/December2002/03/c9340.html>

Canada NewsWire. Give us your message. We'll give you the world.

Attention News Editors:

Child custody laws discriminate against fathers and children, lawsuit claims. Federal Court asked to strike down rules that encourage the 'battle of the sexes'.

CALGARY, Dec. 3 /CNW/ -

The federal government's child custody laws are biased against fathers and violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Bill of Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, claims a major lawsuit filed against the government in Federal Court.

The lawsuit, A.B. et al. v. Canada, claims that the legal test used to decide which parent gets custody of the children in a divorce is illegally biased against fathers. Under the current system, divorced moms are nearly ten times more likely than divorced dads to get sole custody of the children.

The lawsuit proposes a fairer way to decide child custody, and asks the courts to change the rules to promote shared, equal custody. It asserts that fathers, like mothers, have a constitutional right to fully participate in the lives of their children, and that kids have a right to spend time with both parents. The lawsuit claims that joint, equal custody should be the norm, unless there is evidence of harm to a child. 'The Charter and the Bill of Rights say that discrimination against dads is just as unacceptable as discrimination against any other group,' said Gerald Chipeur, legal counsel for the Plaintiffs.

'Divorces are hard on everyone - especially the children,' added Chipeur. 'This lawsuit claims that the current divorce laws actually make things worse, by making custody hearings just another 'battle of the sexes,' said Chipeur.

'That adversarial system should be replaced with an emphasis on joint, equal custody that recognizes that children need time with both their mom and their dad.'

The lawsuit, brought by a mom, a divorced dad, and a child of divorced parents, asks the Federal Court to replace the current, biased rules with a system that respects the rights of both men and women, and kids' interests too.

For a copy of the lawsuit and other information, visit [www.fairnessforchildren.com](http://www.fairnessforchildren.com)

Reports such as this arrive regularly. If you join some group's listservers, it's possible to receive nearly 100 emails a day. I was receiving typically 20 a day while this book was being written, one of which was the above example, arriving on 4 December 2002.

## Consultation exercises

There are regular consultation exercises by the Lord Chancellor's Department (LCD) and other bodies, as part of the public consultations over policy and law making. I have made submissions and responses to these. This has opened my eyes most. Those who contribute to the debate are essentially those with specific interests or agendas. I'll just describe some examples out of many that could be given.

It can be seen in the *Making Contact Work* consultation of 2001 [6]. Central to the proposals in the consultation paper are principles of two psychiatrists, Drs Sturge and Glaser. I've described this example before, but it's worth repeating. The principles proposed include, and I quote : "the child's mental health remains the central issue" and "contact can only be an issue where it has the potential for benefiting the child in some way". As I've argued : in a culture in which mothers are usually given custody without any good reason or rationale, these principles will ensure that decent fathers are placed in an extremely difficult position. The principles, rather than supporting fathers' rights over their children, place them in a humiliating position in court, in which they have to prove they are somehow beneficial to their own children. Such principles certainly do place fathers in this position. These principles are central to family law, rather than principles concerning justice.

The response to this consultation exercise, with respect to Sturge and Glaser's principles, was given in the subsequent report of February 2002 :

Of the 240 respondents, 167 answered this question. Of the 167, 148 said "yes"; 19 said "no". Whilst some respondents pointed out that the question was phrased in such a way that a "yes" answer did not necessarily imply agreement with the principles set out by Dr. Sturge and Dr. Glaser, the overwhelming majority of those who answered "yes" made it quite clear that they agreed with the two doctors' analysis.

The various women's groups are vociferous in their responses to consultation exercises. Most of these groups get funding, directly or indirectly, from the government. So the government gives these people funding, then asks them their opinion of government proposals, then is pleased when they agree with the proposals. Is this democracy in action ?

In 2004, Butler-Sloss gave oral evidence to a Select Committee on Constitutional Affairs, who were investigating child residence and contact cases. Here is an extract from the transcript of Tuesday 9 November :

Q23 Keith Vaz: Dame Elizabeth, there is a perception that the family court system is biased against fathers. What is your view on that ?

Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss: Well, it is untrue for a number of reasons. First of all, the Children Act requires us to treat spouses equally and parents equally, and my experience is that we do. I must have found, like both my brethren, for fathers on many, many occasions, but the situation is basically that when parents separate, the vast majority of children stay with mother and for the minority who stay with father, at the end of the day probably what we call the status quo is the situation which occurs because the child is settled there, and in cases where father is caring for

the children, that is where the children are likely to stay. I have not come across in recent years, certainly in the Court of Appeal when I was there or now as President sitting both in the Court of Appeal and the High Court, cases where I have come across any bias in favour of mother or prejudice against father. I think one of the problems is that the public do not know what we are saying and I feel quite strongly, and what I had to say was endorsed and repeated by James Munby in the judgment that hit the headlines, that we ought to be giving our judgments to a far greater extent in public, and I think if we did that, whether we would dispel the perceptions, I do not know, but at least those who wanted to read them would know what was actually going on, but it is not true.

So here we have someone, who was then the most senior judge in family law, telling a parliamentary committee that “it is untrue for a number of reasons” that the family court system is biased against fathers. You may read more of the transcript, with further information about Butler-Sloss, at <http://www.c-g.org.uk/issues/shame/debs/content.htm>. I will make no further comment about what I think of her views, except to say that it appears the committee were grossly misguided by her, and there can be no excuse for ignorance on her part.

### **Other feminist influences**

An article in the *Sunday Telegraph* of 19 May 2002 started with the following headline and paragraphs :

## Move to outlaw secret DNA testing by fathers

By Martin Bentham and Lorraine Fraser

*(Filed: 19/05/2002)*

Fathers who conduct secret paternity tests on their children will face prosecution under new laws to be proposed by a Government watchdog.

The Human Genetics Commission will recommend in a report to ministers that the theft of a person's DNA, including the clandestine removal of a child's hair or saliva, should become a criminal offence.

The proposal has come out of fears that increasing numbers of fathers are exploiting the growth of internet DNA testing services to undertake paternity checks without the consent of the child or its mother, with potentially traumatic consequences for all involved.

...

I saw a breakfast programme on television in 2002, on which appeared Helena Kennedy, the well-known barrister, who, at the time, was also Chair of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA). She was advocating that the law should be changed to make it a criminal offence for anyone to take someone else's DNA, or at least only to be allowed to take the DNA with a court's approval. Hence men who are suspicious that the children they are raising or have been claimed their own by the mother, and who want DNA tests, should be obliged to apply to court for permission. The reasons given were that such DNA tests could be distressing for the mother and children. Somehow the distress of the man, who is worried about the situation, and the possible distress to him in obtaining the test results, were not discussed at all. Hence a man facing such a deeply worrying situation, instead



of obtaining help from others to resolve his problems, if he attempts to help himself, will find himself the subject of a criminal prosecution. The BBC presenters were very grateful for Kennedy coming on the programme and explaining her proposals. I wondered, what business is it of any individual barrister, or of the Chair of HFaEA, to give an opinion, and what right has she to try to impose such laws on us ? Who gave her permission to decide or even influence our laws ? Who does she represent ? Why did the BBC not allow an alternative opinion ?

Feminists in positions of influence appear to have no inhibitions about interfering in the rights of others.

### **A war against men and fathers**

An article in *The Times* of 4 January 2000, written by Alexander Frean, Social Affairs Correspondent, described some proposals by Baroness Hollis, Social Security Minister in the Lords. The first paragraph of the article was “child support payments should be regarded as a statutory tax on fatherhood and not a voluntary contribution, the government minister in charge of reforming the Child Support Agency said.” Here are some extracts from the article :

Child payments ‘must be seen as tax on fathering’

by Alexandra Frean, Social Affairs Correspondent

Child support payments should be regarded as a statutory tax on fatherhood, and not a voluntary contribution, the government minister in charge of reforming the Child Support Agency has said.

Baroness Hollis of Heigham, Social Security Minister in the Lords, said she was determined that payments by absent parents should become as widely accepted as income tax. ...

Baroness Hollis said that absent fathers had to get into the habit of making child support payments as soon as they become liable. "We are trying to turn [child support] into a tax, rather than a voluntary contribution." she said. ...

So it seems that some people wish to see enforced child support to be regarded as a tax on men who father children.

The article included a photo of a happily smiling Baroness Hollis. I would have included a scanned image of the article, but the syndication people of *The Times*, NI Syndication, wanted maybe £40 from me for permission.

Another article, this one in *The Independent* of 17 March 2002, describes proposals from Rosie Winterton, Minister in LCD. They were proposals that domestic violence should be considered in contact cases. The second paragraph was "a Government amendment to the Adoption and Children Bill, to be debated on Wednesday, means that children who have suffered or could suffer the trauma of witnessing violence at home will be protected from potential abusers". The principle that a father should lose contact with his children because of a dispute with another person is quite perverse. It would not be a principle applied in e.g. a case of robbery with violence, and we know of no reasons why such an evil principle should be extended into the matrimonial and family area. The fact that such an act also damages innocent parties i.e. the children by cutting them off from a parent, is a second independent major reason to reject the principle.

By 2004 the taxation system had been changed to include the concept of the 'tax credit'. This seems to be giving money as benefits under another name. In May of 2004 I received an email directing me to a website [www.money2mummy.co.uk](http://www.money2mummy.co.uk) which advises mothers about the 'child tax credit' then available. It wasn't clear from the homepage who controlled this website, but reference is made on another page to HM Treasury and Inland Revenue, i.e. government departments. An extract from the website homepage included :

In most cases, this means that the money will go straight to Mums, and that fathers will lose money from their pay packet. Reminders have been sent to over one million homes nationwide encouraging families who have not yet signed up to find out how much they could claim.

...

The initiative that will mean more money for Mums is in line with the view held throughout the country that Mums are better at managing family finances.

Here we have a mechanism, through the taxation system, to extract funds from a father and make payment to the mother. Without the father being consulted about the principle of this, or about the amount, or on how the money should be spent. So ordinary decent fathers have this imposed on them, as if they cannot be trusted to sensibly provide for their families. The taxation system is being used to remove control from the father of money which he has earned.

These examples illustrate typical attitudes of women in positions of influence and power.

## Feminist campaigners

Most people know of Germaine Greer, and others, with their feminist attitudes. But few realise how far their attitudes stretch, or appreciate just how far they are prepared to go, including in their media opportunities. Let's take one example.

Several years ago I watched a television programme, as best my investigations tell me, this was in July/August 1996 on Channel 4 (Ch4). They had a series of 6 programmes called *If I were Prime Minister*. They invited well-known celebrities to appear, and tell us all what they would do if they were in this position. Germaine Greer was one of those invited. My recollection is that she calmly explained that she would have all 16 year old boys sterilised, after a 'sample' had been taken. If these boys were later, as men, to prove they were a useful human being, they would then be allowed to become fathers.

I have recently been able to see a video of the programme, supplied by Raymond Cuttill, who organises the Internet radio programme, the *Men's Hour*. To quote her exact words, she opened the item with a consideration that as Prime Minister :

ehm - I know I'm faced with - ehm - a precipitous decline in male fertility and a decline in the quality of the sperm and also in - eh - negative useless mutation.

...

I would see as my primary obligation as a leader of this country - to do the best I could for the coming generations, so, more in sorrow than in anger [short sound, similar to a curtailed laugh] ...

then she calmly explained that :

I promulgate that we will take a copious sample of male seminal material - at maturity - at 16

...

and it will go straight into liquid nitrogen and then we will vasectomise all our male citizens - which would be appropriate if they continue to be irresponsible about what they do with this protein - and that in future ... if they find a willing partner who wishes to bear their child - and they have a certain number of points for being a useful rather than a noxious human being - they have access to their seminal material ... and the privilege of paternity is this.

With her at the time was Professor Stephen Smith of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Cambridge University who explained that her proposals were :

technically ... do-able.

That someone is prepared to say this sort of thing on a major terrestrial television channel, and that this is allowed to broadcast, says volumes about attitudes towards men. The question is of

course, would such things be broadcast if the sexes had been reversed ? It seems unlikely in the present climate.

Is making this sort of suggestion, even if it is made in conjecture about what someone would do if they were Prime Minister, not incitement to hatred ? Are there not laws in the UK against such incitement or making such uncivilised proposals ? If so, are Greer and Ch4 to be held liable ?

## **The influence of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)**

One exceptional instance of feminist influence can be seen in the activities of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC).

During my own case, when I realised the discrimination against men that was going on, I contacted the EOC for advice and help, and to see what they could do about my case or about the situation generally. It's amazing where a little ignorance and naïvety will take a man. They dismissed my call for help of course. They did have someone phone me back and explain their position. They told me the same story as they've told all the others who have contacted them, and I've heard of a number who have.

And then there was the time, much later, that I asked the EOC to investigate the issue of the *NAPO Anti-sexism Policy*, along with all the others I contacted over this. My letter was answered in person by the then Chair of EOC, Kamlesh Bahl. She said that she raised the issue with both NAPO and the Lord Chancellor's Department, so far as it was in the EOC's remit, but didn't say what the limit of that remit was.

The EOC's response to a man's problems are to say that : they can't get involved with any issue if that would interfere with other laws, and that they have to prioritise their activities because of limited resources.

It seems odd that the EOC should be able to take up many comparatively trivial issues that women are concerned for. For example, in the Scottish borders region, there is a custom in towns such as Hawick and Galashiels, called the 'common ridings'. This involves a group of locals on horseback riding around the town's common, in memory of the border skirmishes of centuries ago. The ridings had traditionally involved only men, but some local women took exception to this. The EOC supported them to take legal case against the organisers. I don't know the outcome, but the EOC's assistance was given in this while they are not apparently able to help men over much more serious matters.

Part of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA75), which the EOC exists to implement, allows the EOC to report to government if existing policies or laws are discriminatory. But it appears that Kamlesh Bahl and the EOC could not use this in the family law area. I'm not aware of any cases taken by the EOC concerning discrimination against men in any existing laws etc. It's interesting to know that about two-thirds of EOC staff are women, and the Chair has always been a women in recent years.

## **Informing MPs about discriminations against men**

The UKMM National Council met regularly, about every three months. A lot of the debate did not lead to any particular activity, but some did. At the end of 1997, UKMM National Council decided to use the remaining stock of the booklet *Discrimination*

*Against Men in the UK* to inform our MPs about this subject. The booklet had happily paid for itself in sales, and we had about 750 copies left out of the original print run. As there are about 650 MPs, we had enough copies for this purpose. All MPs were sent a copy, together with a questionnaire to judge their reception of this information. We received only about 20 responses, and only a few had found the time to complete the questionnaire. One of those was Jane Griffiths MP, of Reading East. I'll make no comment on her responses to the questions. Here is an extract from the responses, and her own hand-written note at the end of the questionnaire :

<p><b>8. Criminal Law</b> Treatment of men in <b>criminal law</b> is more severe than that of women for the same offences.</p>	<p>YES <input checked="" type="radio"/> NO</p>	<p>The few high-profile female murderers (eg Rosemary West, Myra Hindley) receive more opprobrium than do the many men.</p>
<p><b>9. Family Law</b> Men are persecuted, and have their human rights violated in large numbers every year in <b>family law</b>.</p>	<p>YES <input checked="" type="radio"/> NO</p>	<p>The Children Act allows men who may be violent or abusers full access to children without duty of care.</p>
<p><b>10. 'Women only' syndrome</b> The '<b>women only</b>' policies exist e.g. in library and swimming baths sessions for women only.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="radio"/> YES NO</p>	<p>Why not? Men could seek similar sessions if they wished.</p>
<p><b>11. Media Representation</b> Men are given a 'bad press' in <b>media representation</b>, without any substantiated evidence that this is justified.</p>	<p>YES <input checked="" type="radio"/> NO</p>	<p>Whatever do you mean? Grow up and stand on your own feet.</p>



<p>17. DO YOU SUPPORT REFORM OR REPLACEMENT OF THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION (EOC) ?</p>	<p><input checked="" type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO</p>	<p>It should be strengthened.</p>
<p>I have a 16-year-old son and he is more adult than this questionnaire makes you appear. Go back</p>		
<p>THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME <sup>to your</sup> IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE <sup>with</sup> <sup>kit.</sup></p>		
<p>Please return this completed questionnaire to :</p>		
<p>UKMM, PO Box 205, Cheltenham, Glos., GL51 0YL</p>		

We subsequently made a complaint to Reading East constituency committee about Griffiths' behaviour, questioning if it was professional. They didn't even acknowledge the letter. However, in February 2004 she was de-selected as a Labour candidate. The *Daily Telegraph* report of 23 February did not give reasons for the de-selection.

### Corresponding with my MP

I have written to, and visited the surgery of, my MP, Doug Henderson, on a number of occasions. I took a report from John Campion to his surgery, and placed it on the table. It was about one inch thick. Doug Henderson just said "I can't read that", meaning the size was a problem. He did once write to the Lord Chancellor's Department about an issue I'd raised, but has basically said on most occasions that he can't act without a legal opinion, or I should see a solicitor. He has remedied nothing that

I'm aware of. On one occasion, he sent me some papers which gave the Labour Party position on family issues.

Consider this : I had problems which I took to my MP. Not only about my own case, but also about the situation generally. I expect an MP to represent my views in Parliament and to the responsible authorities, so that remedies will result. Instead of doing this, he sent me a copy of his own party's policies. So, at this point at least, he was representing his own political party's views to me, not my views to others. He was representing to me the views of a set of complete strangers who I knew almost nothing about, and with whom I have probably almost nothing in common. Why should I be interested in the policies of a group of politicians ? What relevance has this to my problems ? What happened to democracy ?

### **Engaging with the clergy**

In my naïvety I believed that the churches in the UK stood for morals and order in society, so decided to visit some local bishops. The Bishop of Durham holds a place in the House of Lords, and the Bishop of Newcastle a place in rotation amongst other bishops. They must have some influence surely I thought.

There was David Jenkins, previous Bishop of Durham. He didn't say much. Then Michael Turnbull, who was quite supportive in fact, although didn't promise any action on his part. And I saw two Bishops of Newcastle. Firstly Alec Graham, who welcomed me warmly, and nearly fell off his seat when I told him the anecdote about my first solicitor's behaviour. He did admit to being alerted to an 'aggressive feminist agenda'. And Martin Warton, who seemed very sceptical about the issues that I briefed him on.

So I'd drawn a blank with the senior clergy, who I'd previously imagined would be allies. The Church of England continues to marry men in its churches despite the married state being legally meaningless in providing protections, indeed despite the damage to men's lives caused by entering marriage in one of the church's services.

## **Typical court judgements and their analysis**

If we take the trouble to look at court judgements, we learn even more. The senior courts are most influential, as their judgements are followed by the lower courts.

Here is a case in which a father used, or rather attempted to use, HRA98 to protect his rights. The case was in front of judges Ward and Buxton LJJ, in the Court of Appeal, in 2000. The report reference is G-A (A CHILD) [2000] UKHRR 572, Court of Appeal, Ward, Buxton, LJJ, Judgment date 29 February 2000. It illustrates the intellectual capabilities of our senior judges.

The mother wished to move with the child, of which she had custody, from the UK to New York, on the pretext that she wished to obtain work in New York. The father did not want his child moved as obviously he could have either extremely limited, or most likely, no further contact, and appealed a county court decision. Her case was treated as a case under article 8.1 (respect for private and family life) while his was under article 8.1 (respect for family life). The judges essentially had to balance her rights with his under article 8.1, and decided that she should be allowed to take the child to New York, even though he would perhaps never see his child again.

To analyse this decision, we compare the human rights respected for each party, by these judges : her human rights were upheld for : article 8.1 (respect for family life) to be allowed custody of her child, and article 8.1 (respect for private life) to be allowed to take a job in New York; his human rights were violated for : article 8.1 (respect for family life) not having custody or even any contact with his child; the children's human rights, also under article 8.1, to have stability, to remain in their home country, to continue having their father around, appear not to have even been considered.

Put simply, her human rights were upheld on two counts, and his were violated on one count, and the children's were not even considered. In domestic law, the principle of the child's best interests is considered 'paramount'. In this case it wasn't even considered. If you wish, she has human rights, but he doesn't, and the children don't. This decision is so absurdly unbalanced, so obviously based on selective allocation of human rights, that I don't have adequate words to say what I believe about these judges.

## **Judges doing what they want**

It hasn't been possible, given the very limited resources available, to conduct a comprehensive and representative survey of the skulduggery of judges. But the occasional anecdotal evidence has appeared.

Many men whose stories were heard complained of a judge's unwarranted behaviour. Such as John from East Grinstead thinking that the judge in his case had acted unprofessionally. As John reported in his account of his case [1, annex 2] : "Judge N

hunts around in the evidence like a rat on a sewage farm for scraps to hold against the father. She comes up with: He is insensitive to women and children. He cannot get on with other adults. He has denigrated with the mother. He has wiped his son's bottom. He pushes the children too hard at school. He plays with them at their level. He talks to them about inappropriate matters, etc, etc”.

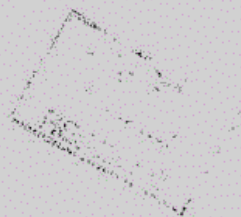
And there is the very blatant case which Stan of Coventry reported about Judge David Parry in Guildford County Court. Judge Parry had been the subject of a recent complaint to the Lord Chancellor's Dept, made via an MP, from Stan, a father involved in Children Act proceedings. During the case Judge Parry wrote the letter, shown below, to a clerk at Guildford County Court. In this Judge Parry : asks the clerk to show a letter from one party, the mother, to another judge who will hear the case; he asks that the letter be shown “in confidence”, presumably meant to mean that no one shall know about it, if acted upon this would have the effect that the court would accept evidence from one party without the other party's knowledge and hence without a right of reply; asks that any further letters from the mother are also passed to him, please carefully note, without the father being able to respond; refers to the matter of the complaint with “the words ‘storm’ and ‘teacup’ come to mind”, so trivialising a very serious matter for the father in the case.

PRIVATE

Epson County Court

2.12.97

Mrs. K. Easterbrook  
Guildford County Court,  
The Law Courts  
Mary Road  
Guildford, Surrey.



Dear Mrs Easterbrook,

My thanks for your note enclosed with  
the letter from \_\_\_\_\_ of 23rd Nov 97

Please continue to forward correspondence  
to me. I believe a further hearing is  
fixed for 4th December. In view of the complaint  
to the C.J.D. I indicated it would be  
inappropriate for me to hear the matter at  
present. I enclose a copy of  
letter which should be shown to whoever  
hears the matter in confidence. I  
do not propose replying to the letter. I

have forwarded a copy to (C.J.)  
to advise the Lord Chancellor reply  
to the M.P. who was 'encouraged' by  
Mr. [redacted] to make a complaint about  
my conduct of the case. The words  
'steam' and 'teacup' come to mind!  
  
With best wishes  
  
Yours sincerely,  
Julian Paine.

Here is a transcript of the letter, with case reference and names removed :

PRIVATE

Epsom County Court

2. 12. 1997

Mrs. K. Easterbrook [a clerk of the court]  
Guildford County Court  
The Law Courts  
Mary Road  
Guildford, Surrey

Dear Mrs Easterbrook,

[case reference]

My thanks for your note enclosed with the letter from [Mrs] --- of 23 Nov. 1997. Please continue to forward correspondence to me. I believe a further hearing is fixed for 4th December. In view of the complaint to the LCD, I indicated that it would be inappropriate for me to hear the matter at present. I enclose a copy of [Mrs] ---'s letter which should be shown to whoever hears the matter in confidence. I do not propose replying to the letter. I have forwarded a copy to the LCD to 'assist' the Lord Chancellor's reply to the MP who was 'encouraged' by Mr --- to make a complaint about my conduct of the case. The words 'storm' and 'teacup' come to mind !

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

David Parry

Another glaring example is that of Lord Justice Thorpe, a senior judge in the Court of Appeal. Here is a report from *The Times* of 31 July 2003 :

*The Times*, 31 July 2003 : Mothers can take children to new life overseas, by Frances Gibb, Legal Editor

Two fathers are to lose regular contact with their children after their former wives won the right yesterday to take them abroad with their new partners.

The Court of Appeal reversed the decisions of county court judges who had refused the mothers permission to



relocate the children, in one case to South Africa and in the other to Australia.

Lord Justice Thorpe said that to frustrate "natural emigration" risked the survival of the new family or blighted its potential for "fulfilment and happiness".

He said: "Often there will be a price to be paid in welfare terms by the diminution of the children's contact with their father and his extended family."

He said that it was also possible for a father to take employment abroad after separation or to marry a foreigner and there would be the same loss of contact.

"These are the tides of chance and life and in the exercise of its paternalistic jurisdiction it is important that the court should recognise the force of these movements and not frustrate them unless they are shown to be contrary to the welfare of the child."

Both cases involve mothers whose marriages broke down and who want to marry new partners. None of the parties can be named to protect the identities of the children.

One of the mothers, who is 40, married her husband, now 44, in 1986 and they had two children who are aged 7 and 10. The marriage began to fall apart in 1999 after the mother met a wealthy South African businessman. Both began divorce proceedings in 2002, but although the mother's divorce comes through next month, her new partner is not yet free to remarry.

In the second case the 32-year-old mother has a six-year-old child by her marriage to the 38-year-old father. They were divorced last year. The mother met a Philippines citizen with right of residence in Australia and they want to set up home in Perth, where the man has a well-paid job.

Let's consider what is said here from the point of view of the principles applied. Thorpe has introduced the issue that "to frustrate 'natural emigration' risked the survival of the new family or blighted its potential for 'fulfilment and happiness'". The report doesn't give his opinion about the 'fulfilment and happiness' or about the civil rights of the fathers.

But the real issue here is that Thorpe uses a consideration of emigration issues to help justify his decision. There is no reference in any written family law that this specific issue should have any bearing whatsoever in family law.

Thorpe also considers it significant that the mother's new partner "has a well-paid job". But a father's income is not usually a factor which will enhance his merit in custody disputes. In fact it is regarded as a useful source of money to provide for the children so can be confiscated and given to the mother. However the mother's new partner's income is a factor which merits her case. It seems judges look on a man's income in whatever way they choose to suit their purposes.

Thorpe will no doubt be considered, by his peers and other lawyers, to be very 'learned' in the legal sense, and will understand a lot of principles. However, if judges have so much discretion to consider a wide variety of issues and principles in any given case, it is difficult for the parties in the case to predict outcomes. It is therefore difficult to understand what rights and responsibilities will be upheld by a judge. Family law, as it presently operates, does not demonstrate simple guiding principles which the people subject to these laws can assimilate and be familiar with. As this affects such a major component of their lives, this is an entirely unsatisfactory situation.

## **Court processes and timescales**

Most court users find the process, with application forms, costs, dealing with clerks, being pressured to employ lawyers at great cost, a difficult process. And a very expensive and time-consuming one.

The timescales are often unacceptable. If a man is separated from his children by a deliberate act of the mother, and it takes 3 months to get into court, that allows alienation to set in. The articles of ECHR include the concept of remedies “within a reasonable time”. We don’t have that in the UK.

There must be far better ways of handling cases. After all, with such basic components of a man’s life at stake, it should be possible to get into court within a few days, without the hassle, stress and expense, and to get remedies.

But of course those operating the present system have no incentives to improve it. The system operates to maximise their income.

## **Other people’s views on our society**

There are some who have questioned the cultural changes in recent times. While John Campion was with Family and Youth Concern, he advised Peter Hitchens for a chapter on family law.

Peter’s book is titled *The Abolition of Britain* [12] and chapter 10 titled ‘Difficulties with girls’. In it, Peter gives a perspective on laws and social support for the family. While he doesn’t give case examples to illustrate his points, he recognises the broad situation.

In chapter 14, titled ‘Is Britain Civilised ?’, Peter identifies Roy Jenkins as a major influence on liberalising laws during the 1960s. He quotes Jenkins as saying “the divorce laws, which involve both a great deal of unnecessary suffering and a great number of attempts (many of them successful) to deceive the courts”. Peter further refers to the development of laws without public consent : apparently Jenkins had published a book with his liberal views in 1959 called *The Labour Case* and as Peter says “although Jenkins had the courage to set out his ideas in *The Labour Case* few voters can have been aware of them, and they were not official government policy. As a result, no MP could ever be held to account for them at a general election, or ever has been. The fiction of a ‘free vote’ in which MP’s ‘consciences’ are respected is one of the most powerful propaganda weapons of the cultural revolution. All that the MPs are free of in these cases is any pressure whatever from their constituents, who have no way of punishing them individually or collectively for ignoring their wishes and opinions”.

So Peter Hitchens identifies the stealth involved, and the lack of public consent, in such developments.

## Looking at ethical principles

In 2002, the LCD produced yet another consultation exercise, *Promoting inter-agency working in the family justice system* [7]. This time they had proposed the setting up of a Family Justice Council. I prepared a response. In doing this I considered all I had learned to date.

This was : that the legal system was corrupt and not operated as Parliament had intended; it had been developed in an *ad hoc*

manner, and was not based on any ethical principles, but in fact based on degenerate principles; the people involved were, let's say, 'unsuitable' for their role, and those, with specific anti-men and anti-family agendas, had obtained positions of much influence, and should be removed from policy and law making.

To give just one example of the degeneracy, consider the treatment of men with regard to their children. The judges, every day, separate men from their children to a greater or lesser extent. In the majority of these cases, these men haven't done any substantive wrong. In legal terms, they aren't proven to have done any wrong. And they are usually fit fathers.

This process takes place due to the application of the principle of the 'child's best interest'. But this principle is applied in an unfettered way. This allows judges to decide what is in a child's best interests rather than the capable and innocent father. That is, even when that father has done nothing wrong, and is fit to care for children. If we allow judges to take control of children from capable fathers, we are accepting any amount of intrusion into a man's life. There should be a principle that no judge should be allowed to interfere with a man's control of his children, unless that man has been shown to do substantive wrong or is unfit. The fact that a wife has tired of the man is not a good reason to interfere in that man's life. It is no reason at all.

The 'child's best interest' principle is also used in conjunction with another principle, that judges may order transfer of assets based on the communist principle of others' needs. The transfer is of course usually from men to women, as women obtain custody as default. So any man claiming that he can better provide for his children, because he has a better home, or more assets or income, finds that the judge simply confiscates the assets and transfers

them to the mother. Income is balanced through child support demands. The man is often obliged to sell his home to enable transfer of money. Having ordered this transfer of assets, the judge can then say that the father cannot provide better than the mother.

And we also have the 'no-fault' divorce principle, which, while women almost automatically get custody of children, prevents any protection for men against badly behaving women.

So we have three major principles, i.e. 'no-fault' divorce, child's best interests without restraint, and the communist principle of 'need', each ethically degenerate in their own right, operated together.

If we allow judges to interfere in the lives of such decent men, in any way whatever, we are opening up abuse of these men, and gross violations of their lives. There should be an ethical principle built into law, and applied, that if a man has done no substantive wrong, no judge should be allowed to interfere in his life. At all. Over his children, home, life savings, or future income.

It was interesting that the proposals for the Family Justice Council included that it should be chaired by the President of the Family Division, then Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss. So a senior judge, who enforces laws, was also to be seriously involved in making them in this role, as well as in the existing role of a senior judge. Is that ethical? Is it acceptable in a democracy?

I further said in the response that those men who have had their lives violated should be given compensation, and that steps should be taken to ensure the present situation would not be repeated.

The political system is clearly inadequate to provide remedies. We have essentially a constitutional issue over who controls policy and law making, and who controls the judges.

I had come to the conclusion that it would be necessary to point out in submissions these various points, and to do this in unambiguous terms. The best presentation of these ideas is in *Restoring Control* [4].

I haven't forgotten the words of a supporter who gave a talk at the UKMM AGM at Imperial College in 1997, a barrister, a friend of the UKMM and CG, who understands these matters. He said "it's the biggest problem this country has", and refers to those responsible as "villains".

I wouldn't like to say how long it would take to remedy this. We can only conjecture.

## **An analogy**

When we consider the damage being done to men through family law, including loss of children, home, life savings and providing for others who are neither friend nor family, we understand the depth of the damage.

In other areas of life, causing damage to others on this scale is usually classified as a criminal offence. Stealing such minor items as a video or a car, items which can be readily replaced, especially with an insurance claim, is a criminal offence.

But none of the actions of a woman against a man, including abduction of children abroad, is a criminal offence. If someone

other than the mother were to abduct the children, that would be a criminal offence. But it isn't when it is a mother abducting children from a father.

There is no balance between civil family law and criminal law. Judges often apply what they call a 'balancing exercise' in civil cases. No 'balancing exercise' has ever been done between the principles applied in civil and criminal law in this area.

## **Ongoing life**

All of this involvement in men's rights activities was in my spare time, as I had my lecturing position at Northumbria to maintain for most of the working week. It has been hard work at times, I admit. But I had tried to balance work, campaigning and play.

I had ensured that I walked in Northumberland many Saturdays, and occasional days in the breaks. And about 1993 I took up tennis, and enjoyed that and the exercise it gave. And I would swim once a week too. I also enjoyed going racing, national hunt preferably, with two pals Pete and Mick Coulson. I'd worked with Pete at Vickers. About 1992 I joined a social group called Nexus. It's mainly but not only for singles. There are local 'bar nights' as a regular venue, and lots of events such as going to the theatre, restaurants, weekends away including walking, and so on. It was a useful addition to my social life for someone suddenly left on their own. And it has lots of women members, many of whom, while not young, are well established with homes and material things. Lots of divorcees, some widows. My walking pal Gerry Fenwick, who had social membership, seconded my application to the Royal British Legion. I was a member of several clubs and organisations. So there was plenty to keep me busy. Too much usually.



The children visited regularly until they were about 17, when they started to make their own decisions about visits. For about 10 years I didn't get much of a break during the year. University term times were busy, to be immediately followed by the children arriving, then a continuous mixture of finding activities, cooking, washing up, to be closely followed by another term, and so on. And no one to share this with. On a matter of principle I didn't visit them in Bristol after one or two trips, which included to their schools. Why should I follow someone around the country? The children were once exchanged at a motorway service station. What a ghastly process. Imagine, exchanging children with a woman who didn't communicate at all, and was an enemy. The judge had suggested I look at flights. They were surprisingly inexpensive initially. Brymon Airways operated a flight Bristol to Newcastle. Later the costs rose. When it's 4 or 5 times a year, the cost becomes significant, even when it's shared 2 ways. But why was it costing me at all? I didn't take them away from their home, and wasn't responsible for the distance. I'd done everything I could to prevent it. Another outrage.

But there were holidays with the children. Not each year, but every 2-3 years. We had a week at Ambleside in the Lake District together. And I had another week with my daughter at Coniston. And, as I'd always promised myself one day to visit the Outer Hebrides, I went with my son using one of the Caledonian-McBrain's 'island hopping' tickets. Three days of fishing mixed with general touring. Great. I'd like to return.

In 2001 I again visited southern Ireland, with my daughter Claire. We flew from Newcastle to Dublin, spent three days there, visiting the Guinness brewery and various other spots. We took one of the guided walks available from Trinity College, one called the 'Terrible Beauty'. This took us around places in Dublin where

important events in the Irish War of Independence took place, such as the GPO in O'Connell Street. It was lead by a history PhD student called Brian, whose research was in the financial aspects of Irish independence. It was riveting. We then hired a car, and travelled from Dublin to Kilbeggan, going to an evening race meeting there. It's Ireland's sole National Hunt-only course. Then Galway, Ennis, down to Killarney, then Cork, Wexford and back to Dublin. Near Athlone, we visited the Rosse telescope at Birr Castle. That was a thrill for me. And I bought a book in the visitor centre at Birr Castle about the Parsons family called *From Galaxies to Turbines* by W Garrett Scaife. My dad had spent his early career with the Parsons turbine manufacturer in Newcastle, so there was a link here.

In 1994 I had already visited Ireland for a week on my own. If the CSA had taken effect in my case, it would be even more difficult to pay off the mortgage. So I visited Ireland both as a break, and to assess if I'd like it there. To avoid the UK jurisdiction. Yes, to avoid it. To be driven out of my own country, just to be allowed to lead a life with some dignity. I wouldn't have been the first or the last. And I fully understood why some men do leave the situation they're in. It isn't just money problems, it's also the whole difficult domestic situation, which for many also includes on-going hassle with the children's mother. I understand why the statistics tell us that many men never see their children again. It isn't that they are without concern, although a few are, it's usually the result of the overall unbearable situation they are in.

Luckily for me, but also because I kept some order to a difficult situation, mine was just bearable.

## **Part 5 : the future : 2004 +**

*When bad men combine, the good must associate;  
else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice  
in a contemptible struggle.*

Edmund Burke 1729 - 97,  
Irish statesman and philosopher

From  
*Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, 1770

It's worth considering the future. To do this we need to take stock of what we know about the present situation, how far we have come, and what history tells us. But there will need to be some conjecture, as we don't know, or fully understand, the factors which affect the future.

### **What is known – about the law**

No one expects that the law will operate perfectly all of the time. We hear of cases of wrongful convictions for very serious crimes. But we do expect the law to operate correctly most of the time, and be based on ethical principles that most people accept. And, referring to the old tenet about law, we expect not only that justice will be done, but will be seen to be done.

Matrimonial and family law operates against decent men most of the time, and without any basis in ethical principles, and without public acceptance. One would imagine that this situation could not be perpetuated indefinitely. Yet after decades, somewhere between a quarter and half a century, these evils are still continuing. And this is despite the existence of a Human Rights Act and a European Court of Human Rights.

The most significant issue is that decent men can no longer rely on the law to protect them. With a 50% divorce rate, this fact implies that marriage and a family are dangerous ventures for a man.

### **What is known – about the culture**

In terms of the country's culture, the terminology used, the general acceptance by the public and by the media of current social conditions, there appears to be only a limited indication that some people are unsettled.

The vast majority of the population don't find the subject of men's rights the first they want to get onto at the pub, or at a dinner party. They are much too busy talking trivia. And 'political correctness' has taken over. No one seems to want to criticise anything much. It's all about fun things such as clothes, football, holidays, beer, new restaurants they've tried, cars, and other material things.

Beyond this there is a general denigration of men, seen in television programmes, adverts, social commentary. And even the active promotion of hatred towards men, such as Germaine Greer's wish, stated on TV, that if she were Prime Minister, she would have all 17 year old men sterilised. This type of attitude is

comprehensively dealt with in a recent book *Spreading Misandry* by Nathanson and Young. The authors aim to produce 2 further volumes to complete a trilogy called *Beyond the Fall of Man*, and say their “ultimate goal ... is to help reverse the current polarization of men and women” [14, pages ix and 235].

An anecdote which illustrates attitudes towards men, and how pervasive such attitudes now are, comes to mind. While being a regular at the Royal British Legion in Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, I had some acquaintance with a few ex-servicemen. One of them, older and respectable looking, who always came dressed in jacket and tie, had a daughter who had apparently got pregnant by a boy-friend who she didn't want to marry. My acquaintance calmly told me that he had advised his daughter, as part remedy to her problem, to tell the police that she had been raped by her boy-friend. Consider this : here we have one of the older generation, an ex-serviceman, an otherwise respected member of the community, encouraging his very own daughter to knowingly make a false allegation of a serious crime. Such an allegation could have had a very serious affect on the man's life. It could have ruined his career and resulted in a term in jail. This illustrates the level of respect for that man's civil rights by others, even by others who we might expect should know better.

### **What is known – about the church authorities who marry us**

The religious organisations, including the Church of England, seem oblivious to the fact that those they are marrying are not staying married, or not getting married but cohabiting, and don't know what they are letting themselves in for when they do marry.

Certainly, I know of no initiatives by the religious authorities to address these issues.

In fact these authorities don't seem to have considered recently, or maybe not ever, what marriage means or what it's for. They may have considered the religious aspects, but not the practical issues and their affects on people's lives. Of course many couples are married in church, by a clergyman. The couples are encouraged to enter the state of marriage and the ceremony confers the legal status of marriage on them. But marriage, as a legal institution is not only meaningless in providing protection when things go wrong, but is actually a dangerous state for men.

In this situation, isn't it then unethical for a body, such as the Church of England, to be the agent which encourages and formalises the marriage ?

### **What is known – about public attitudes**

Mainly because we receive our news via the media, many effectively live their lives and take their attitudes from the media. If we haven't seen it on television, it doesn't exist. Occasional newspaper and media articles appear. The Pope has given an opinion. And various others have too, such as the religious groups who don't seem to understand the full situation.

But even when we have told the media what is going on, they don't report it. Maybe the situation is similar to that faced by some journalists on occasions. When the concentration camps in Germany were liberated after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, Richard Dimbleby, the now-deceased broadcaster sent a report back to the

BBC. They initially refused to air Dimbleby's report, refusing to believe the story which we now all know to be true.

### **“This is law ?”**

Sir Bob Geldof was interviewed for television news in 2002. He had heard some men's stories, having had contact with FNF members. He had also experienced his own case, although seemed to have come out of it reasonably unscathed. So he has some familiarity with what is going on. In the television interview he expressed what many thought with the phrase “this is law ?”. It was said in a tone of incredulity.

Most men who have been through the system, and I was no exception, react to their experience, and are incredulous that such things can go on in our country.

The combination of lack of any protection, the stress, the financial costs, the trauma of the outcome, are hard to accept for decent men who have supported their families and done honest jobs. It seems inconceivable to them that the UK's family law could inflict such deliberate abuse. Most men have not had the opportunity to analyse what is going on, let alone come to understand why. They only know they are being abused, and usually react against the most immediate problem. This is often obstruction to playing a full part in their children's life or unreasonable and unjust demands for child support.

Jamie and Joanna Bogle, he a barrister and she a campaigner, both gave talks at an AGM of UKMM. Jamie, referring to men's attitudes after their cases, put it so well with the expression “they just can't believe it”.

Many men feel compelled, because of the situation they are placed in with regard to the children, home, and life savings, to try to defend themselves and to obtain justice through the courts. They often find the system doesn't defend them of course. But lawyers continue to make money from this, no matter what the outcome of cases. Expressions which are often used about the lawyers include 'gravy train'. Perhaps 'extortion racket' is also appropriate.

The fundamental violations of innocent men's lives are very great. In my limited study of history, I would have thought that wars have been fought over less than this. So why is the collective men's reaction so tempered ?

### **What is known – about those in power**

Many MPs and ministers have been briefed many times. Their response is usually to placate in the meeting, but to find reason to do nothing later. Are they influenced by the fact that this is not an election issue ? Or that most voters are women, and more fickle ?

We have an Equality Minister and a Women's Minister. They have set up mechanisms to scrutinise all new laws for 'women-unfriendly' aspects. Maybe that should be 'women-privileges' aspects.

The recent Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, is said to have absconded with the wife of another prominent Labour politician, Donald Dewar, who has since died. Irvine has been a colleague of the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, in his barrister days. And so the connections go on. How can Blair approach Irvine with the request



that the law should bring philanderers to book ? Or deserting wives ?

Some anecdotes about those in positions of influence show their attitudes. There are two anecdotes relating to Donald Dewar.

Donald Dewar gave a talk at one of FNF's public meetings after an AGM. I don't recall the year, but it would be about 1993 perhaps. A few of us met him over coffee at the break. I told Dewar that the system of family law was corrupt. He looked sideways at me, and made a disrespectful noise. That showed his level of respect for my opinion.

Some time after this incident, Donald Dewar had led a campaign to have what was referred to as 'Clause 28' repealed in Scotland by the Scottish Parliament, of which he was then First Minister. Section 28 is a section of law which prohibits the promotion of homosexuality in schools. Many parents, we believe most, would not wish to have their children 'educated' about homosexuality, but they have had no say in the issue. Repeal was not part of Labour's manifesto in the 1997 general election. The issue is essentially concerned with parents' rights to control their children's education. A Scottish businessman, Brian Souter, had offered to finance a referendum in Scotland to allow the public the opportunity to have their voice heard. Dewar was heard to say on TV on Tuesday 28 March 2000, with regard to the referendum proposal : "we can't have the country run by private individuals and private referenda". However, the proposed referendum was intended to provide not a 'private' referendum, but allow the public to give their opinion on the subject. They had not previously been able to express an opinion about this. Dewar's statement illustrates the intolerable arrogance of those who govern us, and perhaps particularly the lawyers among them. We appear to have

little democracy in the UK by which ordinary folk can have their wishes granted, and Mr Dewar's statement simply confirms the situation.

In a well-run country, it should be possible to take an issue to your MP, explaining what has happened, what you are dissatisfied with. The MP may make enquiries to clarify the situation, but should put the matter before a responsible minister or authority. And the issue should be sorted out in good time.

In the UK, this doesn't happen. Certainly not if you're a man involved in a family case. Trying to get someone to listen is a major hurdle. If they do listen, they then find excuses to avoid the issue, or just pass the buck. One of the UKMM NC compared dealing with Westminster with "wading through treacle". It's clear that the government, ministers, committee structure is inadequate to run a country as a modern democracy. I can't analyse the exact problems in the UK, as I don't know the control structures involved, but the problems are surely there.

### **When they are found out – who will they blame ? – what will they say ?**

Suppose we brought those responsible for the present corruption and degeneracy to book for their part in it.

It's likely that the senior judges will want to deflect attention from themselves, and put the blame on others. That's how such people work.

So they will want to blame the lawyers for poor advocacy. And the lawyers are certainly guilty of that, as well as cashing in on the divorce industry.

Or they could blame the court welfare, now CAFCASS, officers for poor quality reporting. And these officers are certainly guilty of that and more, having accepted the subversive *NAPO Anti-sexism Policy*. Or blame the managers of these officers. Remember that the Chair of CAFCASS, Anthony Hewson, did not prohibit the use of the policy, and his staff in the form of Jonathan Tross has said it is acceptable under their 'diversity' policy.

Or blame the politicians for not providing them with sensible laws.

Or blame social scientists for not informing them of the effects of their judgements.

And I could go on.

I wasn't present at the 1946 trials in Nuremberg of the Nazi leaders after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. I haven't had the opportunity to read the transcripts. But I think it's a fair bet that at least one of the defendants, and probably more than one, and maybe on more than one occasion, said something to the effect of "if only we had been told what was being done to the Jews, we would have put a stop to it". Is this the same sort of thing that our senior judges and politicians will rely on if they were brought to trial for the human rights violations of men and fathers ?

## Why has this happened ?

Let's consider why the situation may have occurred. Possible factors include : feminism; those with social agendas to engineer society; the vested interests of lawyers who make, I once estimated, about 25% of their collective income from family law; judges who are 'out of touch' with other people's lives.

Perhaps we need remedies to each of these factors.

It's interesting to consider an opinion given in a quotation :

*His Majesty's judges are satisfied with the almost universal admiration in which they are held.*

Lord Chief Justice Hewart, 1936

This judge was British, but which planet did he come from ? Was the world different in 1936 ? Almost certainly it was.

I have been invited to the Christmas drinks party of a firm of solicitors in Newcastle for a few years. This has been an opportunity to meet lawyers outside of an office or courtroom. Being aware of the status of what is called 'marriage', I had been interested in making a legal challenge in the UK about the fundamentals of this state. I mentioned this to one of the barristers, and that I was looking for a suitable case and for someone to represent the issues in court. His response was simply "well pay me".

We see in this response the attitude of most lawyers. I had assumed naïvely that, while some lawyers are mercenary, many had entered

their vocation as they had beliefs about justice and wanted to play their part in providing justice. I was mistaken, their vocation was to make money.

## **Assessment of the situation**

On the campaigning front, by the present time, a number of issues were clear.

The mechanisms for remedy are : changes to judicial decisions in the senior courts; individual case law challenges under human rights or constitutional law; campaigns which bring sufficient pressure on those who have the ability to bring remedy, our MPs etc; and direct action by groups of men.

It appeared there would be no quick remedies to the issues in matrimonial and family law. Because of the various factors and problems involved.

These factors include : the men's and fathers' rights groups are, without exception, either badly organised, badly funded, badly led, lack appropriate principles and policies, or some or all of these together; individual case challenges have not so far changed any fundamentals, despite serious challenges, due to judicial obstruction; our MPs in Parliament, our ministers, etc, do not understand what is going on, or don't want to know; the public at large don't understand what is going on, as the media have not told them.

It's possible to look at the events that could change the situation. We can only postulate possibilities, and consider the likelihood of developments as a result of them.

## **Philosophies - of the existing men's rights groups**

There are a range of philosophies and approaches within the various men's rights groups. Groups may be categorised as either fathers' rights or men's rights. The former concerned with family issues, the latter with all aspects of men's lives.

The issues we are concerned with are a little complex, or are made to be by current laws and policies, or appear to be because of our view of them. Some see the only issue is to ensure fathers remain in contact with their children after separation. FNF is an example. Others see child support demands as the main issue. NACSA is an example here. Others again recognise further problems, such as international abductions, which are essentially allowed by women, but not by men. And there are some issues about schooling and healthcare decisions, such as who makes them. Only one or two groups believe that the whole picture needs to be taken in when considering these matters. So groups don't agree on what the major problems are.

In terms of how we should approach these problems, there are also major differences. Many men are only concerned for the issue which has affected themselves most. This is usually child contact or support. They look for a remedy to that issue only. So obstructed contact should be prevented they argue. Or the CSA should be abolished. A popular approach is to demand shared parenting. Those advocating this point out that it would be fairer, and better for the children, and that it would largely ensure that both parents contribute equally to child support, so resolving maybe two issues.

Many men are entirely innocent of matrimonial wrongdoing, and are understandably affronted to see their rights removed. Others have deserted their wife, or had affairs which caused the separation. Many were married and some were not, the ratio in the 1995 survey being 86% and 14% respectively. Those innocent of wrongdoing want justice. But those guilty still argue that their input to their children's upbringing is not something they should forfeit. They also argue that the children, themselves innocents in the situation, have a right to contact with both parents. And these are fair points. Those who had married usually believe that this should confer rights as well as responsibilities. Many of those who hadn't married believe they should have equal rights to the mother. They don't have this under present law, as they don't automatically have the same 'parental responsibility' as the mother, although usually they acquire this on application to court. However, the mother wasn't married either, yet she has this privilege. Feminists have demanded and won equality in other areas, so why don't men, it is argued. Unmarried men therefore see no reason why they should not have the same rights as their unmarried partners. And this is not unreasonable comment.

And I could go on, about other issues and other attitudes. So philosophies about the problems and their resolution are very diverse. Attempts to bring men together on common ground have been made. It's worth looking at experience.

When John Campion initiated the first Cheltenham Group meeting in 1994, he thought it useful to invite as many representatives of different groups as possible. I had contacts in Scotland and encouraged those I knew to attend. At the meeting, John tried to get all those attending to understand the significance of marriage. As I've explained, it is important, as it lays down the principles and rules, which men should have knowledge of before they

embark on setting up home and having children. But it was heavy going to convince others.

The next across-groups initiative, at the Pike and Eel near Cambridge in 1997, was again initiated by John Champion. This time he decided, quite sensibly, not to try to convince others of the right philosophy. He thought it was better just to organise activities on which we could all agree. Initiatives were set up, and without a great deal of hassle.

Another example of a cross-groups meeting took place on Saturday 11 December 1999, starting at 11am. Again this was to be a national meeting of various groups. It was to be in an upstairs room of the Tap and Spile, Birmingham. It was organised by Steve Butler, a FNF member from Bristol. Steve had suffered child contact problems. He wanted to start a new initiative. At the meeting we were asked not to criticise each other's groups, and to try to find common ground for us to jointly campaign on. The letter of invitation made it clear that 'contact matters' would be initially looked at to form a basis for agreement. We discussed all day, but individual opinions varied significantly. Because this was a type of 'umbrella' group, it was called the Birmingham Brolly. Steve Butler did a fine job in the organisation of the meeting, but was himself only concerned with child contact issues. If only he'd spoken to John Champion or myself, to get the wisdom of experience, but he didn't. And this indicates another problem men have. Many want to be leaders, to have their own initiatives, and many think they have the solution. To use an old expression, if I had a penny for every one that I know of, I'd be a rich man. I can't now remember what followed this 'Brolly' meeting, perhaps some policy statement was produced. Anyway, nothing significant came out of this. There was simply too much difference in establishing



common ground, and not enough agreement on how to proceed. So yet another national initiative came to nothing.

An attempt to create a new approach was the setting up of the Equal Parenting Party (EPP) by Tony Coe in about 1999. As the name implies, it was to aim for equal parenting. Tony initially intended to have a candidate in each constituency at the following general election. He did have a candidate, Peter May, standing I think in Kensington at the 2001 election. But he clearly found it impossible to field candidates throughout the country. As John Champion had stood at the Beckenham by-election in 1997, some experience was available. The problems, costs and likely outcome could have been described to Tony Coe by John Champion. But again, someone had a solution and didn't think it worth asking others about their experiences or their opinion. The EPP was renamed to Equal Parenting Council (EPC), and that's what it is today. Subsequently, EPC set up training courses, and charged for them, despite few men who need them having much in the way of funds left. Tony comes over very well on the media, but hasn't changed anything yet. I hope he does.

### **Lack of coherence in men's groups**

The fact that, by the time of writing, the various men's and fathers' rights groups were without adequate leadership, without adequate coherent philosophy, and without adequate organisation and funding, needs to be considered.

This all-pervading and serious issue, family law, has not been addressed with a concerted response, but with confused and separate responses, with various groups unable to agree what to do. We can only look at the whole culture and education in the UK, to

explain this. This could take a great amount of study and research to analyse the causes and effects in this area, and as I haven't had the time or opportunity to do this, will leave it for others to investigate.

## **Philosophies - the essential principles**

Ideas about the real problems, and the approaches which are best taken, have therefore varied considerably. Only when John Campion became involved did I realise that the real issue is one of marriage, men's rights in marriage and the protections which should be available.

The philosophy is simply explained with a few key points.

If a man embarks on the significant venture of living with a woman, and/or having children with a woman, then there ought to exist rules governing this venture. The rules must be fair and transparent. That is, they should be known to all who contemplate and commit themselves to marriage, and must provide justice in all eventualities. The rules must further be written down, and easily understood. This will prevent the judges from changing the rules as they do now, and allow ordinary men to understand what they are committing themselves to. This of course is the fundamental reason for having written laws. After all, when we embark on a new mortgage or a new job, we know the basic rules. And so we should about our family. But further, ordinary people should have some input to the formulation of the rules, some input in setting them up, so that we all know they are sensible and feel happy about them. We don't want someone else dictating their own strange notions onto our lives, or dictating their own alien ideas to us. And we should be able to rely on the courts to implement them as they

were, or as we the people, intended them to be implemented. This is the basis for democratic control in any country.

Expressed more in legal terms, getting married and having children should be moderated by law. Law that, in a democracy, has been set up and agreed by the people whose lives will be affected. The people that contemplate marriage and a family, not those against marriage and families, as happens at present. The law should be written down in a form easily understood by all. Judges should not have the power to vary the written law, and there should be sanctions against any judge that tries.

These issues are supposed to be moderated by a form of law, if we can call what is going on 'law' in any real sense. But all the other essential underlying principles are missing at present. That's why it's right and reasonable to describe the present system as degenerate.

Many men, including men who have been through the present day system, argue that marriage is a thing of the past. What such men don't understand is that when a separation occurs, some rules will be brought into play. That will always be the case, so long as we have any law, in any form at all. The rules used to be called matrimonial law. If anyone doesn't like the terms 'marriage' or 'matrimonial law', fine, they can use different words. But whatever words they choose, some rules will be applied at separation. So men need to be involved in setting up the rules, to ensure that they are fair, and to monitor the system, to ensure they are applied by the courts.

This, in essence, is the Cheltenham Group philosophy.

So, if we discuss the need for marriage, we're really only discussing the name we give to the rules. And who decides the rules. And whether they are acceptable to those committing themselves to marriage and a family. Men who question the need for marriage are supporting the feminist aim. To use a few old expressions, they have 'scored a spectacular own goal', and have 'shot themselves in the foot'. It would be better to say they have shot themselves in the balls, as they are, in a sense, conceding many of their rights in the reproductive use of their balls.

What's important to understand is that feminists believe it is in their interests to remove the rules of marriage. And that is against men's interests. What's also important to understand is that we men should decide if we're happy with the rules, and not have them imposed on us and dictated to us, as at present.

An argument put forward for the judges' behaviour, in dealing with a separation, is that they are only dividing out the rights and responsibilities between the parties. However, the division must be made with a consideration of who did what. In legal terms, this means looking at the behaviour of the parties. To do anything else will allow the abuse we presently see of innocent men. In other words, we must apply fault to the situation, at least fault of a serious nature. Leaving the top off the milk bottle is not serious, no matter how irritating. But to most people adultery or desertion is.

As an example of the type of abuse possible, I'll remind of one case I heard of in Newcastle. The man had been buying his own home for 4 years. It was on Chapel Park Estate. He married a woman who already had a child. Within one year they fell out. Despite no substantive fault on his part, he was ejected from the house. So this woman got the house from him. The judge probably argued that her 'need', with a child even when it wasn't his child, was greater

than his. After only one year. Now that cannot be just, unless he had behaved very badly. If women know this is possible, some of them will take advantage. If fault had been applied, he would not have lost his home, and other women would not be tempted to take advantage. I'm not saying that many women would set about this deliberately, but if they become dissatisfied, their minds may change to possible advantages of separation.

If judges are unable to determine fault, and because of the complexity of the situation, that argument has been used, then an equal division of rights should be applied. That way, at least neither party should feel too aggrieved.

It's important that men's groups work together, adopt the right philosophies, and that the approaches are sensible.

## **Triggers and thresholds**

Outstanding leaders come and go. John Champion was the most outstanding example of any in the UK. Another could turn up.

An injection of resources, perhaps by a wealthy person or body, could trigger a series of developments. Such a person hasn't so far, but it's possible.

Groups could become better organised, funded and led. Through this mechanism, more of the public may become aware and involved. More could be done full stop.

Internet use will increase, and information distributed via websites and email. This has already happened to a degree, but not to take us to the threshold of a critical mass of people being involved. Of

course the topic of concern is competing with other interests for the public's attention.

Sufficient MPs, receiving sufficient complaints, could one day bring action within Parliament.

## **Individual case challenges**

A number of men have taken cases to the European Court of Human Rights. Recent reports have arrived of constitutional challenges in the USA, if successful, could have an effect on this side of the Atlantic.

Cases such as these require individuals with resources. Or groups who could pool resources for this purpose. The domestic application, those in the UK, are actually the most expensive. But, since the advent of the HRA98, it is more than ever useful to take a case through the courts locally before going to Europe.

Human rights law is not a static thing. It develops over time. What is not a human rights violation now may well be considered so in 10 years time. Certainly, it's an outrage that present practices are not considered to violate human rights.

## **Pressures and a critical mass**

It's clear that the various men's groups are inadequate to the situation they face. But this may not last indefinitely.

Most of us accept that there are others more fortunate in life. For example, we accept that some are born wealthy, some achieve

wealth with little apparent effort. We nevertheless get on with our education and career, doing our best usually. We get mortgages, and many own their home when they retire.

However, when we have a regime in which decent men, capable fathers who have done no substantive wrong, are not even allowed to keep the results of their labours, that's when these men will react. It's clear that we don't have a critical mass of such men just now, but on-going publicity, particularly through the Internet, is likely to change that.

## **Direct action**

During 2001 to the present, a number of demonstrations had been, and were being, organised by a new group, Fathers 4 Justice (F4J). These have included a presence outside of the Royal Courts of Justice, and judges' homes, etc.

There was a demo in London on 17 December 2002, with up to 200 men dressed in Father Christmas outfits, touring on open-topped double deckers. The slogans were something along the lines of being allowed to be a father at Christmas.

Another demo on Friday 13 June 2003 was at the High Court in High Holborn, London. I was there. The 'A-group' entered the court and took over the court room. They conducted a mock trial of senior judges while the other demonstrators, the 'B-group' and 'C-group', caused havoc outside on the pavement. Something like 50 police were called out, including those who deliberately video recorded everyone for police records. The 'A-group' were allowed to leave the court after having their photos taken and giving their names and addresses. The court was closed before the demo ended.

It has been reported that the group's leader, Matt O'Connor, had been invited to meet Lord Falconer, the new Minister for Constitutional Affairs, a role which will replace the Lord Chancellor in 2004. We will have to wait for the outcome of these initiatives.

At the time of writing, these demonstrations do not appear to have reached the level at which they would create much influence, but that situation may change.

## **Judges' behaviour**

The senior judges will no doubt be considered, by their peers and other lawyers, to be very 'learned' in the legal sense, and will understand a lot of principles. But perhaps they have so many principles that they get a bit confused as to which they should apply in each case they hear. Or perhaps they deliberately maintain a repertoire of principles so that they can, on a whim, apply whichever suits them at the time.

One thing is for certain however, that a man appearing in their court could not possibly guess which principles they will care to apply in his case. So that poor man has no guidelines on how he should behave in the family to best please these judges.

It is not clear what these judges know about justice or about the reasons we have written law. It is not clear which principle or principles they will apply in their next case. In short, they appear to be judges who are not guided by written law or any fixed set of principles. From this perspective they can be considered out of



control. They obviously need to be brought back under control and given fixed principles that we, the people, can rely on.

These judges, instead of following their duty to the public, go out of their way to prevent justice being done. Some of them seem to be, as they say in Yorkshire, “two pence short of a shilling”. Others are obviously simply villains.

It is possible that senior judges will one day see the light. All that can be said is that they appear to be a great distance from civilisation at this point in time. Judges apply what is often called a ‘balancing exercise’ in their judgements. What they know about ‘balance’ in family law is negligible. In fact they appear to be mentally unbalanced. Certainly they are intellectually inadequate to the position they are placed in. They are not operating within democratic principles. They have taken the law into their own hands. They have forfeited every right to the respect which they may otherwise have been held in.

Whether or not judges evolve case law which remedies the present situation, we will need to have suitable written law established. This is the only possible recourse we can consider.

## **MPs and the constitutional position**

I have concluded that men make a mistake by voting for the main political parties in the UK. None of the major parties, Conservative, Liberal-Democrats, and especially Labour, who have introduced more anti-men measures than any other party, represent the interests of white males. I did not vote, as a matter of principle, in the 2001 election. In my constituency, there were only

3 candidates, one from each of the major parties. And no independents. And no one speaking for men's rights.

But experience shows that most independents obtain only a few votes. Unless the candidate has the resources to match the major parties, or are well known figures such as Martin Bell, they can't compete. We seem to have come a long way from the situation in which a local person represents the concerns of local people. In Newcastle, I remember canvassers coming around the doors at one time. At least it was possible to give your opinion about some issues. Now they don't bother, and rely on the media to promote their party for them.

However, I'm not aware that any single issue of law has ever before determined the outcome of a general election, so it seems unlikely that concern for a single issue will become a major issue in this way in future.

Parliament would presumably need to set up a committee of investigation, or whatever it is that Parliament can set up. But the ministers of the day, or the Prime Minister, appear to set the agenda for Parliament. What happened to democracy ?

## **'Independence' of the judiciary and political agendas**

The Lord Chancellor's Department (LCD), and MPs, etc, always stress 'the independence of the judiciary', that is, that judges should act without pressure from politicians. However it seems that most judges use some political doctrine to decide cases in family law, and do this without regard for the written law. They go to great lengths to see that fathers are held to their 'responsibilities', but only financial, with little consideration of their rights.

Those who advise the LCD usually stress concern for children's interests, as if this is the only issue of significance in family law. This readily obtains support of course, from those who fail, or do not wish, to understand wider issues. There has not recently been, as far as I'm aware, much concern for justice between the parties.

So how do we prevent such people controlling or influencing our laws ?

## **Operation and control of the law**

This must be brought under appropriate control by constitutional laws. Not only must new laws be passed, but judges must be required to respect them, and must be prevented from re-introducing corruption. And mechanisms need to be introduced to prevent further corruption. And to prevent unsuitable people from gaining influence and power. All of this, and maybe more, are needed.

The men whose lives have been violated should be given full compensation, firstly to provide them with justice, and as a reminder to those who would deny them justice.

## **What happens if we get remedies ?**

Political parties appear only to be interested in one thing. That's getting elected next time. Individual politicians seem to think they are in politics to line their pockets, not provide a public service or to serve the country. And the idea that anyone should operate with basic principles seems to have died. The parties presumably have

researchers, maybe statisticians, who categorise us into artificial groups. They use the research to predict outcomes in elections for both the country as a whole and in individual constituencies. They select groups and consider the types of policy which will appeal to each group. So the parties change their principles to suit the findings of the researchers.

Given this political culture in the UK, one thing is certain. When things change, those involved at the time will congratulate each other, telling each other what a great job they've done. They'll give each other knighthoods and places in the House of Lords. That sort of thing. That's what they're like.

### **An opportunity for remedy**

Suppose the government were to set up a body and mechanism to investigate cases of abuse of men's lives. The investigations would probably go over issues such as : the facts of the case, how the previous case was handled, and who was essentially responsible for the violations of the man's life, and the extent to which the law was followed. Unfortunately, with the law being so corrupt, and having been developed without consideration of fundamental principles, it isn't clear to what extent the ethical principles behind the laws would be looked at, as they have not for decades been considered.

There would be some fallout, in the sense that current written law, guiding case precedents, and legal practices would be found seriously wanting. And that specific bodies and individuals would be found seriously wanting, including the government departments responsible, the most senior judges, etc. As well as those identified as having been involved in specific or prominent cases, i.e. judges, lawyers, court welfare officers, and so on.

But there are opportunities for such a body to be set up. My own response to the Lord Chancellor's Department's consultation exercise *Promoting inter-agency working in the family justice system*, of March 2002 [7] was titled *Reformation of the Family Justice System* [8]. This included the suggestion that the Family Justice Council they proposed should include sub-committees to provide remedies for major areas of concern.

In the response were proposals for sub-committees to address the various areas as follows :

Ethics Sub-committee : with terms of reference to define ethical principles based on the family as a basic unit of society, and the rights of well-behaved individuals.

Compensations Sub-committee : with terms of reference to provide a mechanism for compensation to be given to those men whose lives and human rights have been violated, i.e. with terms of reference comparable with the Criminal Cases Review Commission.

Reformation Sub-committee : with terms of reference to (a) investigate and bring to justice all those who have contributed to the corruption and degeneracy since 1948, including especially senior judges, lawyers, court welfare officers, the NAPO officers responsible for the *NAPO Anti-sexism Policy* [2], and expert witnesses, etc; (b) eradicate feminist influence by prohibiting feminists access to the Council and sub-committees.

Research Sub-committee : with terms of reference to obtain feedback from court users about the acceptability of court decisions, procedures and costs.

Publications Sub-committee : with terms of reference to disseminate (a) the ethical basis of laws and the written law; (b) all judgements in a readily assimilated form for laymen; (c) results of the Research Sub-committee; (d) this knowledge into the school curriculum.

The response further recommended the composition of these sub-committees. They should include representatives of court users and user group's representatives, and those of the people who are concerned for the family, the rights of individuals within the family, and for justice. But to exclude the judges, lawyers and feminists, all of who have vested interests, and who have been responsible for the present corruption and degeneracy.

It would take considerable courage for those responsible to set up such bodies and mechanisms. There is no current evidence that they have the fibre for such change. There is evidence that they are held in check by concerns for their own, and their friends' positions, and that they will resist change.

## **History books of the future**

I believe there will be books written, at some time in the future, possibly after the present situation has been remedied. By then, most people will be aware of the situation. It may be that such books are part of the processes of alerting the public and of getting remedies.

Those reading these future history books will view what is going on now with as much incredulity as we currently view the Holocaust

against the Jews. The causes of each of these events will be equally bewildering for those reading about them in the future.

## **A consideration of what the individual man can do**

This topic is worthy of consideration, as men's response to the present situation may well determine future prospects.

As it's not essentially part of a documentary, I've placed this in a separate section, which follows.

The possible steps include those practical measures that we men have direct control over, such as not marrying or having children, and ensuring that if we do marry, then your wife earns her own income and pension so she can't share your own in the case of separation.

Political activity can include writing to your MP and lobbying, and getting over your message in the press and media.

And there are the men's rights groups to join, to give support to, and to help out in a variety of ways.

## **Conjecture**

As in many areas of life, consideration of likely developments is not easy. Especially when so many separate factors exist. I've outlined the facts, the mechanisms and factors involved in the situation, and the opportunities for change.

We will just have to wait and see.

## **What the individual man can do**

*Whose life is it anyway ?*

Brian Clark 1932 - , British playwright

Title of play and film, 1978 and 1981

The individual man can do much to help himself. But it appears he needs guidance on this subject.

### **Studying the subject**

Before any problem can be resolved, it's necessary to have a clear view of it, to understand or analyse what the issues are. This has not been easy for those of us in the men's rights groups.

To illustrate this, I can recount one issue. During the writing of this book, in December 2002, I received an email, one of about 20 that I received each day at that time. This email described how a few men in the USA were challenging child support laws. They had recognised that the law there had imposed on separated fathers how much they should spend on their children's upbringing, while there is no such imposition on normal fathers. In thinking about this, I also realised that the law also allows no control by a father on what the money is spent on. Again, this does not apply to normal fathers.



Some parents like to spend a lot on their children. The children have a television in their bedrooms, even a computer. Others are careful not to spoil the children. So normal fathers have control, they can determine how much they should spend, and on what. But not separated fathers. I'd never considered this aspect.

So separated fathers are dictated to about how much they must spend on their children, and have no control over how the money is spent. As I already knew, these fathers do not even know if the money handed over is actually being spent on the children.

So, even after 12 years of involvement with men's rights groups, I'm still learning about the issues.

### **Why have men done so little ?**

If, during a war or insurrection, a group of people came into a home, took away the children, then forced the parents to pay towards the children while allowing them little or no input to their lives, the population would rise.

But if this is done to a father, by a CAFCASS officer and a judge, this is seen by the population to be acceptable. It is being done in about 100,000 cases each year.

Somehow or other, people have come to accept such practices. And somehow, men have been conditioned to accept their treatment with fortitude, or whatever else it is that causes men to behave in this manner.

This is a subject which should be investigated by psychologists or social scientists. Or perhaps men should ask this question of themselves.

## **Practical steps**

There are a number of practical steps men may take to protect themselves.

For instance, not marrying and not having children. These steps will largely avoid the legal system interfering in their lives.

It's worth knowing that there were proposals from the Law Society about 2000, to regard cohabitation in the same way as marriage. I believe this initiative came soon after Kamlesh Bahl, previously Chair of the Equal Opportunity Commission, became vice-president or some such position in the Law Society. Fortunately, she threw her weight around a bit too much, and fell out with others, and was expelled from the position. She is of course a feminist, and it would be in feminist interests to get cohabitation treated as marriage. This is because it would then allow judges to make what they euphemistically call 'financial arrangements for dependent women'. Which as we know, in a culture of mother-priority without reason, is causing great damage to men's lives.

Soon after Bahl had joined the Law Society in 1999, there was some sort of disagreement, and Bahl was expelled from her position, I believe by the then President. She had apparently been bullying staff or some such approach to getting her own way. After dismissal, she then launched a legal case against the Law Society alleging sexual and racial discrimination. It appears that it's all right to interfere in the rights of the public, as long as you have

lawyers on your side, and they're making money from the process. But if you interfere in the rights of lawyers, and they aren't making money out of it, well that's just not on.

So, men, you have been warned, that there are those who are still making attempts to limit your rights.

Not getting married or having children is hardly acceptable for many men, who have ambitions in this area. The step would remove major components from the lives of such men.

If a man does marry or cohabit, then it's important that, in case of a separation for whatever reason, that the woman has her own job and pension. That way, she will not have a call on the man's income or pension.

Remember that, according to the 1995 CG survey, about 14% of those separated men are required to pay maintenance for the ex-wife, in situations in which she previously had no job to support her. That's in addition to maintenance for the children. In fact the average amount required to be paid was about 50% more than child maintenance. And recently the law on pensions was changed to provide splitting, in cases in which the women had less of a pension. While the split, in theory, only relates to that pension accumulated during the marriage, nevertheless, the pension organisation can claim administration charges. Also, it would be a mistake to assume that such a split would be done fairly. After all, the rest of family law is unfair, so why should a man expect fairness here ?

## **Getting things changed**

On the campaigning front, everyone can help, at minimum time and cost.

Influencing the politicians is essential. So writing to MPs, visiting MP's surgeries, etc, are all useful. Tell them what's going on. Tell them what's wrong. Tell them what needs changing.

Educating the public is also essential. We need to ensure that most people are aware of the situation, and that they are given good information. So writing to the papers and so on is useful. Getting articles published, appearing on local radio, even as a phone-in, takes little effort, and gets ourselves noticed.

While opinions vary, I believe that a sensible delivery of good information, and a recommendation of what needs doing, are best. Don't get excited, don't sound fanatical. But seem determined. Give the impression that you have self-confidence, that you are determined. And maybe a bit angry, after all you've every right to be.

So, if you're concerned, get out there and talk to people.

## **Joining the men's rights groups**

The problems which most group's face are similar : lack of funds, lack of publicity, hence little influence.

Contributory factors are a shortage of good leadership, and weak philosophy and approaches. And just plain silly people in charge.

All these problems may be related to a shortage of members.

Remember that I'd offered FNF a comprehensive report in 1996 which showed what was happening to their members, but no one on FNF NC thought it useful. This and many other instances have led me to think that FNF is not a useful organisation for men to join. The proof is in history. Since FNF was set up in 1974, things have gone from bad to worse. There has been the Child Support Act 1991 (CSA91), and the Family Law Act 1996 (FLA96) fortunately largely countered. And there has been the introduction of Ministers for Women, and changes to the benefits system such that by 2000 there was no support left for marriage. FNF however often claim to have made progress since 1974. Strange idea that one.

I'll say no more, except that I, of course, believe the Cheltenham Group and UK Men's Movement do have the right philosophy and approaches. While these groups can claim only limited success, we at least have the basis for future success, and a sound basis in principles. CG had taken a part in the fight against FLA96, and had caused a submission to the UN to be referred to the UK government. Nevertheless we need to understand the strength of the opposition, how well entrenched they are, and how well involved because of their vested interests.

We do however need good leaders. We need men of vision, determination and quality, who can communicate and encourage. Such men are often triggers for developments, and we can only hope more come forward.

## Political activities

The politicians in the UK still focus, for election purposes, on the old issues of the economy, law and order, health and education, and transport, etc. For many people, the world has moved on, but these politicians are set in the past. None have ever raised the issue of the balance of influence between men and women, and whether there is a fair balance, in a general election. These issues have been brought in as side issues.

And the party system often limits new developments. When people vote, they most often vote for a party member, not the individual. It's important to realise that voting for a party is voting for a package deal.

When buying a package holiday, you have to accept the combination of travel arrangements, hotel, meals, day-trips, costs, insurance, etc. A few or several aspects of the holiday. Similarly with a party, you have to accept the combination of policies, but in this case over a vast range of issues, not just a few.

It is not in the interests of present day political parties to encourage a divide between the sexes. The fact that the Labour Party has introduced a Minister for Women, I believe makes it less likely that we will see a Minister for Men, no matter how necessary this seems. Can you imagine two ministers with such conflicting briefs clashing over the central issues ?

I know of no other area of government, or separate government departments which are, or could be, so directly in conflict. While, say, transport and education departments could be in conflict over available funds to progress their plans, I can't think of two departments in conflict because they represent exclusive groups,

such as men and women, or issues which are essentially mutually opposed. Having ministers for men and women is something akin to having a Minister for Transport and a Minister for Stopping Transport.

In fact democracy, as we know it, was never designed for a situation in which one half of the population was in conflict with the other.

As more men realise the influence women have, and how that influence has been used to limit men's rights, they will change their attitudes. Too many men are 'burying their heads in the sand'. They need to realise that there are deliberate policies by many to limit or destroy men's rights, such as that recent initiative in 2002 by Helena Kennedy, over paternity testing. When enough have realised, and a critical mass exists, they will react in increasing numbers with more determination.

But men must recognise that no major party or government has recently, let's say during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and beyond, been concerned for men's rights in the family. Both parties and government have introduced massive support for single mothers through the benefits system, thus relieving these women's reliance on men. But this has been done without men's voluntary agreement, as taxes are not optional. So men must not vote for any of the major parties, as these are seriously against men's interests.

However, at the same time, these men need to engage the political process. We need more men, aware of the issues which affect men's lives, to become actively involved as lobbyists, and standing for Parliament.

There are precedents. As I've reported, John Champion stood in the Beckenham by-election in 1997, on a platform of social responsibility. In the limited canvassing that took place, many of the public seemed receptive to the idea of such a platform.

At the time of writing, some new parties are attempting to get established. There is the 'New Party for Britain' as they currently call themselves. I've no idea who's behind this, or what they stand for. I assume they will at some point tell us who they are, and choose a name, perhaps after they have obtained support and formed some policies.

We certainly need to clear the current stagnant state of UK politics.

### **Awareness of previous activities**

Many men who join the men's rights groups have little or no experience of campaigning activity.

There have been a number who I'm aware of that arrive with the attitude that they can solve problems. Let's say they're just optimistic. But it would be preferable if they took the trouble to find out the current state of activities before they make extravagant claims. I hope they can solve problems, but I would urge them to find out what has already been done and tried.

It's only by working effectively together that we'll get anywhere. And this implies knowing what has already been done, accepting agreed approaches, and working well together.



## Epilogue

*And now for something completely different.*

John Cleese, Michael Palin, Eric Idle and others, writers of BBC TV series *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, 1969 - 74

Phrase used to introduce another sketch

To finish with, let's consider asking some questions, and what those questions should be, and who we should ask for answers. Only by asking enough questions are we likely to see changes from those made to answer them.

### Asking questions

A number who read this present book will reasonably ask questions. These questions will include whether the facts and analyses are correct, if there is another side to the story, whether the author is 'on the level' and why he is making so many 'sweeping generalisations', and so on.

If the reader questions these issues, then the Cheltenham Group reports listed in the references must be consulted. And some may still be sceptical even after receiving the hard evidence.

Such sceptics may well conclude that there is no case for concern about how we operate our family policies and the law. Others will conclude that there is.

Perhaps there are no absolute rights and wrongs in this situation. After all, we are in the area of civil law, and this essentially operates on the basis of who shouts the loudest. Perhaps the right people haven't yet shouted loud enough.

But the real issues are civil rights and social issues, such as the individual's rights in the family, the enforcement of ordinary families to provide for others at the expense of their own families. But control over the political process, and the return of democracy are also called into question.

The 'stark awakening' experienced by the author is just one of many experienced each year by ordinary men, who can all ask questions.

## **The questions which should be asked**

There are serious questions to be asked about a number of issues.

For instance, why were the major changes to family law brought in by judges but not by Parliament ? Why were they not reported on the front pages of the major newspapers ? Why were they not featured prominently on the BBC News and the ITV News at 10 ?

Why are there no mechanisms in the UK to prevent judges from corrupting the law in fundamental ways ? Does no one ever monitor the interpretation of written law by the judges ? Does no one control judges ?

I always understood that the Court of Appeal and House of Lords were there as a backstop, but it appears they are not. Why is this ?

Why can very few men get remedies for the issues in their case ? For example, why can a man not make a complaint about a solicitor and have it properly dealt with ?

Why have court welfare officers been allowed to behave the way they have ? Why were CAF/CASS officers allowed to implement the *NAPO Anti-sexism Policy* ? Why are they not prohibited from using the policy ?

Why have ordinary men had no remedy from their MPs ? Even after decades of complaints to them ? Is it because they haven't written ? If so, why is this ? Is it because MPs will not act ? And if so, why not ?

Why are 'the people' not involved in policy and law making, in this area which is so basic to their lives ?

There appears to be totally inadequate control in the UK over the law, and little or no democratic process. If there were proper democratic controls, then the corruption would not have lasted so long. Why are there no controls over this ? And what happened to democracy ?

Why are inappropriate people involved in policy and law making ? Why have judges been allowed to be involved ?

Given enough time, I could go on. There are lots of other questions that we need answers to.

## **Who to ask for answers**

We're entitled to ask questions of those responsible. These are those who run the government and parliament. That's who.

But we also need to look to ourselves, as ultimately, we the people should run the country.

## **Living in the real world**

The documentary I've described is the reality of life for many. Those who discuss further developments in law in this area, or refuse to discuss further developments, appear to live in a world of their own. Or in a world which only exists in their own minds. The rest of us are forced to live in the real world, and that world is a hostile place.

## **Other views on the situation**

While there are many views which I could have included in this book, one which appeared in *The Salisbury Review*, vol. 21, no. 4 (Summer 2003), pp. 30-32, appeared as this book was being completed. Titled *Divorce as Revolution*, by Stephen Baskerville, Professor in the Department of Political Science, Howard University, Washington DC, the article summarises conventional men's groups thinking at this time, and refers to the whole of the Western World situation. It is included in the appendices.

## **‘Something completely different’**

We should demand answers from those with influence and control, who should stop and think about what they’re doing.

Let’s hope that the people will demand answers, get answers, and that the answers are the rights ones. Let’s hope that decent people will prevail, and that we see remedies before long.

It would be a fine thing to live in a country we know is run by decent people, under ethical law standards and democratic controls. We, the people, need ‘something completely different’ to what we now have.

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- [6] *Making Contact Work*, Children Act Sub-committee of the Lord Chancellor's Department, undated but distributed March 2001.
- [7] *Promoting inter-agency working in the family justice system*, Lord Chancellor's Department, March 2002.

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- [10] *Article 29 Magna Carta 15 June 1215 Runnymede*, Joe Public aka The Ringer, Wotachambells Press, PO Box 1215, Thorrington, Colchester, CO7 8JD, 1996, ISBN 0 952 826 70 4.
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- [14] *Spreading Misandry : The Teaching of Contempt for Men in Popular Culture*, Paul Nathanson and Katherine K Young, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001, ISBN 0 7735 2272 7.
- [15] *Discrimination against men in the UK*, UK Men's Movement, 1995, ISBN 1 900616 00 9.

## Abbreviations & acronyms

This is not a general list, but of technical terms and of organisations, which the reader may not be familiar with.

CA98	Children Act 1998
CAFCASS	Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
CESPA	Campaign for Equal State Pension Ages (now Parity)
CFAFH	Campaign for a Fair Hearing
CoA	Court of Appeal
CG	Cheltenham Group
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSA	Child Support Agency, Child Support Act [1991]
CSA91	Child Support Act 1991
CWO	Court Welfare Officer
CWS	Court Welfare Service (replaced by CAFCASS April 2001)
DADs	Dads After Divorce (since amalgamated with UKMM)
ECHR	European Court of Human Right, European Convention on Human Rights [and Fundamental Freedoms]
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
EPC	Equal Parenting Council
F4J	Fathers 4 Justice
FLA96	Family Law Act 1996
FNF	Families Need Fathers
FYC	Family and Youth Concern
GF	Grandparents Federation
HFaEA	Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority
HO	Home Office



HoL	House of Lords
HRA98	Human Rights Act 1998
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
INPOWW	Information on Probation Officers in Welfare Work
ISP	Internet Service Provider
LCD	Lord Chancellor's Department
LIPS	Litigants in Person Society
NACSA	Network Against the CSA
NAPO	National Association of Probation Officers
MA94	Marriage Act 1994
MCA73	Matrimonial Causes Act 1973
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MFPA84	Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984
MP	Member of Parliament
SCB	Solicitor's Complaints Bureau (replaced by the Office for the Supervision of Solicitors or OSS)
SDA75	Sex Discrimination Act 1975
SIF	Solicitor's Indemnity Fund
UKMM	UK Men's Movement
UN	United Nations
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Commission
URL	Uniform Resource Locator

## Appendix 1 : Draft entry for *Who's Who*

In the event that the editor of *Who's Who*, that well-known collection of briefings about notable figures in our country, requires an entry from the author, I have prepared a draft, in the conventional format.

**WORRALL, Barry Peter**, BSc MSc CISE MBCS CEng; Senior Lecturer in Computing, University of Northumbria, 1979-2005; *b* 7 March 1947; *s* of Gordon Pearson Worrall and Annie 'Nancy' Worrall (née Barnett); *m* Judith Senior 1977 (marr. diss. 1991). *Educ*: Rutherford Grammar School, Newcastle upon Tyne; University of Newcastle upon Tyne (BSc); University of Southampton (MSc). Software developer with ICL Bracknell 1972-75, Plessey Radar Stoke Poges 1975-76, and Vickers Management Services Newcastle 1976-79; Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in Computing Newcastle Polytechnic later University of Northumbria 1979-. Suffered a 'stark awakening' while observing the legal system, 1990-93, and political system, 1990-, in operation, then became involved in fathers' and men's rights groups; National Council Member, Families Need Fathers, 1991-95; Editor, Families Need Fathers, 1993-95; Member, Cheltenham Group, 1994-; Secretary, UK Men's Movement, 1997-; Director, Cheltenham Group, 1998-. MBCS (Member of the British Computer Society), 1979. CEng (Chartered Engineer), 1990. *Publications*: Discrimination Against Men in the UK, 1995; The Emperor's New Clothes, 1996; Submission to the United Nations Human Rights Commission : Violations of Articles 23 & 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) by the United Kingdom (UK), 1999; Restoring Control over matrimonial and family law, 2002; Without Authority, 2004. *Recreations*: reading history, classical music, country walks, National Hunt horseracing and bashing bookies,

investigating corruption and ethical degeneracy in the legal and political systems, publishing accounts of this, bringing villains to justice. Address: may be contacted via <http://www.c-g.org.uk>. Clubs: Royal British Legion, Jesmond (social member), but equally likely to be found in the back bar of the Gosforth Hotel, High Street, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne.

The editor is invited to contact me to discuss the details of this entry.

## Appendix 2 : Bibliography for further study

This is a first list for those who wish to study further the various topics raised :

*No More Sex War : The Failures of Feminism*, Neil Lyndon  
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London, SW7 3HG, 1992

*Not Guilty : In Defence of Modern Man*, David Thomas  
ISBN 0 297 81216 3, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, Orion House, 5  
Upper St Martin's Lane, London, WC2H 9EA, 1993

*The Myth of Male Power : Why Men are the Disposable Sex*, Warren  
Farrell  
ISBN 1 85702 211 4, Fourth Estate Limited, 289 Westbourne  
Grove, London, W11 2QA, 1994

*Divorced Dads : Shattering the Myths*, Sanford Braver with Diane  
O'Connell  
ISBN 0 87477 862 X, Tarcher/Putnam, c/o Penguin Putnam, 375  
Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014, USA, 1998

*Women Can't Hear What Men Don't Say : Destroying Myths, Creating  
Love*, Warren Farrell  
[Publisher believed to be] J P Tarcher, 2000

*Spreading Misandry : The teaching of contempt for men in popular  
culture*, Paul Nathanson and Katherine K Young  
ISBN 0 7735 2272 7, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001

## Appendix 3 : Getting advice & involvement

This is again a first list, with differing content and use. No guarantee of their usefulness is given. Follow the links on these websites for further help :

National Association for Child Support Action (NACSA) [[www.nacsa.org](http://www.nacsa.org)] - exposing the reality of the Child Support Act/Agency. Of equal interest is their associated NACSA News with its Book of the Dead.

Network Against the Child Support Agency (NACSA) [[www.nacsa.biz](http://www.nacsa.biz)] - another anti-CSA group, using the restored original meaning of the acronym name.

Families Need Fathers (FNF) [[www.fnf.org.uk](http://www.fnf.org.uk)] - concerned with fathers' contact with their children, but not much else.

Shared Parenting Information Group [[www.spig.clara.net](http://www.spig.clara.net)] - as the name implies, considers that enforcing shared parenting will solve many problems.

The Association for Shared Parenting (ASP) [[fp.sharedparenting.f9.co.uk](http://fp.sharedparenting.f9.co.uk)] - originally a breakaway section of FNF (from Birmingham and Oxford), now established as separate organisation.

Equal Parenting Council [[www.EqualParenting.org](http://www.EqualParenting.org)] - starting as a new political party on the platform of equal parenting after separation & divorce, they now operate as a Council.

Fathers4 Justice [[www.fathers4justice.org](http://www.fathers4justice.org)] - bright new grouping, with organised action.

Parity [[www.parity.uk.com](http://www.parity.uk.com)] - a well organised group, initially focussed on the state pension age (and consequential) discrimination, later addressing wider issues

Campaign for Justice in Divorce [[homepages.force9.net/tradeck/cjd](http://homepages.force9.net/tradeck/cjd)] - as the name implies, and currently focuses on the invidious requirement for fathers to maintain their ex-partners, whether they were previously married or not, even if their ex's have since remarried.

Amen [[www.amen.ie](http://www.amen.ie)] - about domestic violence against men.

Men's Health Network [[www.menshealthnetwork.org](http://www.menshealthnetwork.org)] - want to join the fight against prostate cancer etc ?

NORM-UK [[www.norm-uk.org](http://www.norm-uk.org)] - for victims of unrequested circumcision. Apparently there are laws against this for women, but not for men.

Man2Man [[man2man.themenscenter.com](http://man2man.themenscenter.com)] - for male victims of domestic violence.

Campaign for Donor Involvement [[www.w3.ukgateway.net/cdi.htm](http://www.w3.ukgateway.net/cdi.htm)] - a response to the infamous Men Not Included website/facility for women and lesbians to become mothers without involving a man.

## Appendix 4 : *Divorce as Revolution* by Stephen Baskerville

Stephen Baskerville is Professor in the Department of Political Science, Howard University, Washington DC. This article was published in *The Salisbury Review*, vol. 21, no. 4 (Summer 2003), pp. 30-32.

### *Divorce as Revolution* by Stephen Baskerville

For some thirty years now a quiet revolution has been waged throughout the Western world. Most people are now familiar with the social consequences of the divorce explosion: the growth of single-parent homes and massive increase in fatherless children. The Pandora's box of social problems this has released has also reached general awareness. Virtually every major personal and social pathology can be traced to fatherlessness more than to any other single factor: violent crime, substance abuse, unwed pregnancy, truancy, suicide, and more. Fatherlessness far surpasses both poverty and race as a predictor of social deviance.

These problems are alarming enough in themselves. What is seldom appreciated is that they are also responsible for a vast expansion in the power and reach of the state. In fact, so is divorce itself. In contrast to its social fallout, the political consequences of divorce are hardly understood at all, yet they may ultimately be the most destructive.

The result of three decades of unrestrained divorce is that huge numbers of people - many of them government officials - now have a vested professional and financial interest in encouraging it. Divorce today is not simply

a phenomenon; it is a regime - a vast bureaucratic empire that permeates national and local governments, with hangers-on in the private sector. In the United States divorce and custody comprise over half of civil litigation, constituting the cash cow of the judiciary and bringing employment and earnings to a host of public and private officials, including judges, lawyers, psychotherapists, mediators, counsellors, social workers, child support enforcement agents, and others.

This growth industry derives from the impact of divorce on children. The divorce revolution has spawned a public-private industrial complex of legal, social service, and psychotherapeutic professionals devoted to the problems of children, and especially children in single-parent homes. Many are women with feminist leanings. Whatever pieties they may voice about the plight of fatherless, poor, and violent children, the fact remains that these practitioners have a vested interest in creating as many such children as possible. The way to do it is to remove the fathers.

It is commonplace today that fathers are disadvantaged in divorce courts everywhere when it comes to child custody. In today's political jargon we attribute this to 'discrimination' and 'gender bias'. But this does not convey the half of it. Divorce courts and their huge entourage of personnel depend for their existence on broken, single-parent homes. The first principle of family court is therefore: remove the father. So long as fathers remain with their families, the divorce practitioners earn nothing. This is why the first thing a family court does when it summons a father on a divorce petition - even if he has done nothing wrong and not agreed to the divorce - is to strip him of custody of his children. While mothers also fall afoul of divorce courts, fathers are their principal rivals.

Once the father is eliminated, the state functionally replaces him as protector and provider. By removing the father, the state also creates a host of problems for itself to solve: child poverty, child abuse, juvenile



crime, and other problems associated with single-parent homes. In this way, the divorce machinery is self-perpetuating and self-expanding. Involuntary divorce is a marvelous tool that allows for the infinite expansion of government power.

No-fault divorce is the middle-class equivalent of public assistance, creating single-parent homes among the affluent as welfare did among the poor. In the United States, where the trend began, all the major institutions of the divorce industry were originally created as ancillary to welfare: juvenile/family courts, child support enforcement, child protection services. No-fault divorce extended these 'services' to the middle class because that was where the money was, and with it political power.

Like welfare, divorce involving children is almost wholly female-driven. Though governments invariably claim that fathers 'abandon' their children, there is no evidence this is true, nor even that fathers agree to most divorces. Cautious scholars like Sanford Braver of Arizona State University consistently find that at least two-thirds of divorces are filed by women, usually with no legal grounds. Yet lawyers and feminists report much higher proportions. Shere Hite, the popular researcher on female sexuality, found 'ninety-one percent of women who have divorced say they made the decision to divorce, not their husbands.'

This is hardly surprising, given the almost irresistible emotional and financial incentives the industry offers mothers to divorce, including automatic custody plus windfall child support and other financial rewards, regardless of any fault on their part. A Canadian/American research team found that 'who gets the children is by far the most important component in deciding who files for divorce.' What we call 'divorce' has in effect become a kind of legalised parental kidnapping.

Once the father loses custody, he becomes in many ways an outlaw and subject to plunder by a variety of officials. His contact with his own children becomes criminalised in that he can be arrested if he tries to see them outside of authorised times and places. Unlike anyone else, he can be arrested for running into his children in a public place such as the zoo or church. In the United States fathers are arrested for telephoning their children when they are not authorised or for sending them birthday cards. Fathers are routinely summoned to court and subjected to questioning about their private lives. Their personal papers, bank accounts, and homes must be opened and surrendered to government officials. Anything a father has said to his spouse or children can be used against him in court. His personal habits, movements, conversations, purchases, and his relationship with his own children are all subject to inquiry and control by the court.

Despite prohibitions on incarceration for debt, a father can be jailed without trial for failure to pay not only child support but the fees of lawyers and psychotherapists he has not hired. A judge can summon a legally unimpeachable citizen who is minding his own business and order him to turn over his earnings or go to jail.

As the logic of involuntary divorce plays itself out, divorce is forced on not only one parent but both. Mothers are not only enticed into divorce with financial incentives, in other words; they are being pressured into it by threats against their children. Last year, Heidi Howard was ordered by the Massachusetts Department of Social Services to divorce her husband or lose her children, although authorities acknowledged neither parent had been violent. When she refused, the social workers seized her children and attempted to terminate the couple's parental rights. Massachusetts News reporter Nev Moore says such cases are common in Massachusetts.

Family law is now criminalising rights as basic as free speech and freedom of the press. In many jurisdictions it is a crime to criticise family court judges or otherwise discuss family law cases publicly. Under the pretext of 'family privacy', parents are gagged from publicly disclosing how government officials have seized control of their children. In Australia it is a crime for a litigant to speak publicly concerning family courts, even without mentioning specific cases.

In Australia, the US, and Britain, family courts have closed web sites operated by fathers' groups. Britain, Australia, and Canada have all resurrected archaic laws prohibiting the criticism of judges in order to prosecute fathers' groups. In the United States judges cannot be sued, but they can sue citizens who criticise them. The confiscation of property can also be used to criminalise political opinions. Following his testimony to the US Congress critical of the family courts, Jim Wagner of the Georgia Council for Children's Rights was stripped of custody of his two children and ordered to pay \$6,000 in the fees of attorneys he had not hired. When he could not pay, he was arrested.

The swelling hysteria over 'domestic violence' appears fomented largely for similar ends. 'All of this domestic violence industry is about trying to take children away from their fathers,' writes Irish Times columnist John Waters. 'When they've taken away the fathers, they'll take away the mothers.' Donna Laframboise of Canada's National Post investigated battered women's shelters and concluded they constituted 'one stop divorce shops', whose purpose was not to protect women but to promote divorce. These shelters, often federally funded, issue affidavits against fathers sight-unseen that are accepted without corroborating evidence by judges to justify removing their children. Special domestic violence courts in Canada can now remove fathers from their homes and seize their houses on a mere allegation of domestic violence.

Divorce, not violence, is also behind the explosion of restraining orders, which are routinely issued without evidence of wrongdoing, separating fathers from their children and homes. Almost 90% of judicial magistrates in New South Wales acknowledged that protective orders were used in divorce - often on the advice of a solicitor - to deprive fathers of access to their children. Elaine Epstein, former president of the Massachusetts Women's Bar Association, writes that restraining orders are doled out 'like candy.' 'Everyone knows that restraining orders and orders to vacate are granted to virtually all who apply,' and 'the facts have become irrelevant,' she reports.

Fathers are further criminalised through child-support burdens, which constitute the financial fuel of the divorce machinery, underwriting unilateral divorce and giving everyone involved further incentives to remove children from their fathers. Government claims of unpaid child support constitute one of the most dishonest and destructive hoaxes ever foisted on the public. In a US government-funded study, Sanford Braver discovered that most fathers pay fully and on time and that 'estimated' arrearages are derived not from official records but from surveys of mothers. Braver's findings have never been refuted by any official or scholar. Yet ever-more draconian 'crackdowns' and arrests continue.

Last summer Liberty magazine published documentary evidence that 'deadbeat dads' are largely the creation of civil servants and law-enforcement agents with an interest in giving themselves criminals to prosecute. In most jurisdictions, child support guidelines are set by enforcement personnel, the equivalent of the police making the laws. These officials can separate children from their fathers, impose impossible child support obligations, and then jail fathers who inevitably fail to pay.

Child support trials operate on a presumption of guilt, where 'the burden of proof may be shifted to the defendant,' according to the US National Conference of

State Legislatures, which favours aggressive prosecutions. Contrary to Common Law and the US Constitution, courts have ruled that 'not all child-support contempt proceedings classified as criminal are entitled to a jury trial,' and 'even indigent obligors are not necessarily entitled to a lawyer.' Thus impoverished parents who lose their children through literally 'no fault' of their own are the only defendants who must prove their innocence without counsel and without a jury of their peers.

Cases like Darrin White of British Columbia are the result. With no evidence of wrongdoing, White was denied all contact with his children, evicted from his home, and ordered to pay more than twice his income as child and spousal support, plus court costs for a divorce he never agreed to. White hanged himself from a tree. 'There is nothing unusual about this judgement,' said a British Columbia Supreme Court Judge, who pointed out that the judge applied standard support guidelines.

Fathers driven to suicide by family courts are acknowledged by officials in Canada, Australia, and Britain. A suicide epidemic has been documented by Augustine Kposowa of the University of California in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health. Kposowa attributes his finding directly to family court judgements, though media reports of his study emphasised fathers' lack of 'support networks'.

Why is so little opposition heard? Though the conservative media are waking up, the silence of conservative politicians is deafening, given that every prophecy about the dangers of judicial activism, bureaucratic aggrandizement, and ideological extremism is vindicated in the war on fathers. What is perhaps most diabolical about the divorce industry is its ability to co-opt so many people, including its critics. By creating problems to be solved - and then dispensing government money to solve them - the machine gives everyone an interest in fatherless children. Even

critics develop a stake in having something to criticise.

In Canada and the US, domestic violence legislation dispenses a gravy train of federal money to the states/provinces and localities. This is often earmarked with appeals to 'law enforcement', though the effect is to divert it from the prosecution of criminals to the prosecution of fathers. Likewise, child support enforcement is propelled by federal payments rewarding local governments for each dollar collected, filling local coffers and giving officials an incentive to squeeze revenue from (after they have forced divorce on) as many fathers as they can find.

Especially questionable are government enterprises to 'promote fatherhood', which disperse grants to local governments and organizations ostensibly to 'reunite fathers with their children'. Yet they are premised on first separating them from one another. What is advertised as a program to facilitate 'access and visitation' means supervised contact centers, where fathers must pay to see their children in institutions. 'Encouraging good fathering' means state-sponsored television advertisements with actors depicting fathers abandoning their children. One American state receives federal money to implement 'Five Principles of Fatherhood', including: 'give affection to my children' and 'demonstrate respect at all times to the mother of my children'. One cannot help but wonder what penalties the state will bring to bear on fathers who fail to show sufficient 'affection' and 'respect'.

Involuntary divorce is the instrument not simply of tyrannical judges, unscrupulous lawyers, and doctrinaire feminists, but of a new political class whose interest is to subject the private corners of life to state control. Two conservative scholars recently argued in the Journal of Political Economy that the vast expansion of governmental machinery during the twentieth century proceeded largely from women acquiring the vote. Women, far more than men, voted to create the welfare state.

But: 'Why would men and women have differing political interests?' ask John Lott and Larry Kenny. 'If there were no divorces . . . the interests of men and women would appear to be closely linked together.' The premise of their question invites the answer: 'As divorce or desertion rates rise, more women will be saddled with the costs of raising the children.' Conservatives have accepted the feminist argument that the arm of the state is a necessary defensive shield to protect women from the costs of divorce, attributed to male desertion. But male desertion is not a major cause of divorce. The welfare state and expansive government therefore are not defenses against divorce but preconditions for it. Divorce is a political weapon and an offensive one at that, promoted by the same bureaucratic and ideological interests that are undermining and politicising fatherhood and expanding the power and reach of the state to deal with the consequences.

What then can check the march of the unilateral divorce machine?

One theme of intellectuals who dissented from the ideological-bureaucratic dictatorships of eastern Europe was 'nonpolitical politics': to oppose ideology not with contrary ideology but with non-ideology, to resist politicisation by re-creating the ordinary business of 'civil society' and private life. If any group should adopt this philosophy today, it is fathers. For all the effort to 'restore fatherhood' through programs like Fathers Direct, ultimately the only ones who can restore fatherhood are, of course, fathers themselves. Almost by definition, fathers alone can truly 'save the children' by re-creating the family with themselves in it.

In so doing, fathers may also hold the potential to start redeeming a political culture that for thirty years has been sinking into the mire of permanent rebellion. Their current plight indicates how far the divorce 'revolution' has brought us all into a brave new quasi-Freudian world where not only traditional institutions are attacked and brought low, but so now

are private individuals, simply because they hold the most basic position of human authority, the head of a family. Whether they are up to the challenge remains to be seen.

Stephen Baskerville is a Professor in the Department of Political Science, Howard University, Washington DC.

The author of this book thanks Stephen for permission to reproduce the article here.



# **Appendix 5 : *The Convention on Family Rights***

## **by Barry Worrall**

This was produced for the Cheltenham Group, 21 November 1994, to illustrate that such a convention could be formulated.

### The Convention on Family Rights

#### Article 1 : Marriage and Divorce

1.1 : The institution of marriage is to be supported by :

- a marriage contract which has been :
  - either a) defined by statute at the time of marriage,
  - or b) prepared on the parties' own terms;
- clear statutory definition of the intentions of the law, in sufficient detail to prevent judicial misinterpretation, and consistent with a Human Rights Convention;
- public attitudes supported by government fiscal and social policy.

1.2 : No-fault divorce on request of one party alone shall not be permitted; a party who wishes to divorce without due cause will not be entitled to maintenance in any form or to any claim on the estate of the other party upon decease; if a couple both wish to divorce, they should be allowed to do so upon their terms and this should not be a matter for interference by a court; if one party does not wish to be divorced then they should not be so without substantial grounds; if the Petitioner wishes to end the marriage contract without good cause he/she will not be entitled to any benefits that he/she would have received had he/she adhered to the marriage contract other than financial contributions made during the marriage.

1.3 : The right to claim maintenance will only apply to those who have obtained a divorce for good cause without having made a substantial contribution to the causes themselves; maintenance for children shall be shared equally by legal parents, neither party will be required to contribute more than one half of the expenditure, and that expenditure shall be accountable in terms of reasonably expected childcare outgoing costs and no more.

1.4 : The marriage contract, which a couple enter into, on the bases defined in Article 1.1(a) and (b), may be changed only at the instigation of the couple; that is, although family law may change, the laws which pertained at the time of a marriage will define the contract administered at the dissolution of that marriage; a couple will be supplied with a copy of the contract at the time of their marriage in order to ensure their familiarity with the terms of the contract, and to enable a party to present the contract in a court; such a contract may specify all issues to be determined if a party wishes to leave the marriage, including the distribution of assets and the welfare of children.

1.5 : A party may present the contract to a court when they consider that the other party has violated the contract, including after a separation; a court may only determine issues as defined by the contract, and in no other way.

## Article 2 : Children's Welfare

2.1 : Whether or not the couple entered into a marriage contract, their rights over children shall be equal and respected, based on the children's needs and wishes, as established by objective criteria; the objective criteria are children's un-pressured wishes, and whoever may best provide for their physical and educational needs; monies may not be moved by court order from one party to the other for the children's needs; the criteria are not open to change by a judge's discretion;

one party's evidence with regard to the objective criteria will not be accepted without corroboration as defined in Article 4.4.

2.2 : Shared residence shall be normal unless objective reasons involving serious danger to the child(ren) exist; the child(ren) shall not be allowed to be removed from the home vicinity of both parents other than for short periods e.g. holidays.

2.3 : Adversarial court practices in Family Law are to be minimized; the legal system involved in separation/divorce is to be maximum inquisitorial by judge with the parties rather than adversarial by lawyer representatives, although the parties will always have a right to draw a judge's attention to material evidence; statute law will define all issues so far as possible, and so minimise the number of applications to court, and time in court.

2.4 : Any party who creates unnecessary conflict over children is to be appropriately penalised; obstructed contact or parental alienation will normally result in transfer of residence, unless objective reasons exist to indicate otherwise.

2.5 : Monitoring of the effects on families of judicial decisions will take place, at appropriate intervals after a court case, and inferences drawn.

### Article 3 : Responsibilities for Family Issues

3.1 : A single Standing Committee of Parliament on Family Issues, (henceforth referred to as the 'Committee'), with representatives elected by Parliament, is to have responsibility for all family issues, including family law and the supporting agencies; the Committee will have legal enforcement powers as defined in Article 5.

3.2 : Social issues impacting families are to be investigated by agencies controlled by the Committee, in

order to understand causes and effects; majority opinions of married parents are to be recognised rather than those of minority pressure groups.

3.3 : Supporting agencies, such as the Mediation Service, responsible for providing assistance during family crises are to positively support marriage, and minimise the effect of separation/divorce on children and their parents.

#### Article 4 : Family and Human Rights

4.1 : Family law issues are to be clearly established in statute, and any case law decision which clearly overturns Parliament's intentions will be the subject of proceedings in Parliament as defined in Article 5; a complaining party shall have the right to complain to the Committee on such a case without risk of cost.

4.2 : The laws on family issues, are to be compatible with the Convention on Family Rights.

4.3 : The Convention on Family Rights is to be upheld in UK law, as superior over other family law, but inferior under a Human Rights Convention such as the European Convention on Human Rights, to ensure Human Rights are respected for all parties.

4.4 : Evidence submitted in family law proceedings will require corroboration, and one party's word will not be sufficient, because of the serious effect of the case on the parties' and children's lives; allegations of behaviour, and evidence about the ability of parties with regard to child care, will be accepted only with the same burden of proof required in criminal proceedings; cases of perjury will be prosecuted under criminal law.

#### Article 5 : Enforcement of Family and Human Rights

5.1 : Wilful misinterpretation of the law by an agent of the law, including solicitor, barrister, welfare

officer, or judge, while practicing or engaged in writing or lecturing, is to be a criminal offence, actionable by the party(ies) in a criminal court; the Committee shall be able to require the Lord Chancellor to dismiss a judge under such terms as he/she thinks fit.

5.2 : The judiciary are to be directly accountable to Parliament for interpreting the laws which Parliament has passed in accordance with Parliament's intentions; anyone may petition their Member of Parliament on this issue, and will have a right of audience before the Committee, and to redress over any instance of such judicial corruption.

5.3 : Secret hearings and reports, i.e. UK 'in chambers' hearings, in separation/divorce and children's issues cases, are not to be allowed, so that all of society may see that law is interpreted correctly and justice is done; privacy may be protected in law reports by the use of name and place references.

5.4 : Interpretation of the statute law is to be rigorously applied as defined in Article 4.1, but may also be subject to action under a Human Rights Convention by any party against the UK; this will initially be based on the European Convention on Human Rights (all Protocols), including in particular :

- Article 6(1), to provide correct interpretation of the law;
- Article 14, and Article 5 of Protocol 7, to provide equality of rights of parents;
- Article 1 of the (1st) Protocol, to provide natural justice concerning assets of the family.

5.5 : The Committee will have power to instigate prosecutions under criminal proceedings, against any agent within the legal system who does not respect the Convention on Family Rights; this power will also include the reference of cases to the Lord Chancellor

under Article 5.1 for disciplinary proceedings against judges.

5.6 : The Committee will be obliged to refer suspected cases of Human Rights violations to a Human Rights authority, such as the European Commission of Human Rights, Strasbourg; the Human Rights authority must be one which is outside of the control of the UK, and which shall be accountable for their decisions on the basis of the reasons given which shall refer to evidence, law and argument.

5.7 : The Committee will be composed of members who represent a cross section of society; they will be well educated achievers of diverse callings; they will never have been involved in the implementation of any aspect of UK Family Law, either as solicitors, barristers, welfare officers, judges, or members of the Law Commission, or had any other influence, either prior to or during, the introduction of this Convention.

A draft of the proposal by the Cheltenham Group

21 Nov 94

**Acknowledgement : The Cheltenham Group for support in producing this convention.**

## Appendix 6 : From the photograph album

A small selection of photographs from albums, starting with my parents' wedding through to the present day.



My parents Gordon Worrall and Annie 'Nancy' Barnett, at 23 and 22 years old. Their wedding at Galle, Ceylon.

20 July 1945.



With my parents when young, maybe 2 year old. About 1949.



In my favourite 'jeep'. About 1949.





Grandad with 'Wiggy' at Fenton House.

Summer 1961.



My first sea-trout, at age 14. River Till, Northumberland.

Summer 1961.



Rutherford Grammar School. Back row, L to R : Peter Mortimer, Tony Watson, George Watts, Joe Furness. Front row, L to R : myself, Ken ?, Physics Teacher JR Gray, ? ?.

Summer 1962.



My Morgan 4/4 (1939 model) and Gerry Fenwick (1947 model).

About 1971.



Graduation Ceremony, MSc Computer Science, Southampton University. L to R : myself, Bill Taylor, Dave Wynn.

Summer 1973.



Out walking with the family at Bolam Lake, Northumberland. Myself with daughter Claire, at 3 months old, in a sling on my chest.

December 1982.



Fishing at Loch Maree, on one of the islands for lunch. L to R :  
Michael our ghillie, myself and Derek Smith my boat partner.

In prime sea-trout season time of July, about 1986.



Renovating the house on Brunton Park. Assisted by Ross and Claire.

July 1988.





Meeting with Michel Thizon of SOS PAPA, France. I had met Michel at Heathrow when he flew from Paris to meet members of Families Need Fathers (FNF), to discuss collaboration or expansion of SOS PAPA. From L to R : myself, Michel, Eugen Hockenjos, Colin Cooper, Graham Townsend. Photo taken by Steve Stephenson with Michel's camera and print later posted from Paris. At Colin's home in London where Michel stayed that evening. Eugen and Colin attended the second Cheltenham Group meeting later that year in September at Ambleside.

15 July 1994.



Walking by the River Tyne at Wylam, Northumberland. Before the Christmas lunch at Hilary and Gerry's. L to R : Hilary Dawson, daughter Claire, myself, and Gerry Fenwick. 'Joe' the border collie was a regular walking chum for Gerry and myself; he died age 14 in 2001.

Christmas Day, 1995.



The Cambridge Forum at the 'Pike and Eel', Needingworth near Cambridge. Facing the camera, L to R : myself, John Champion, Mark Thomas, ? ?. Published in *The Independent* on Monday 20 January 1997. Photographer Keith Dobney. Acknowledgement to their Picture Syndications Executive for permission, given May 2004, to reproduce here.

Saturday 18 January 1997.

## SOCIAL FOUNDATION PARTY

- Support for family life
- Decent civilised values in policy
- Sound education methods
- Fairly targeted health and welfare
- Fairly targeted benefits systems
- Fair levels of taxation
- Reducing State interference
- A responsible enterprise economy
- A sovereign United Kingdom

VOTE  
CAMPION

November 20<sup>th</sup>



Web-site for our manifesto and publications:  
[www.cheltenham-group.demon.co.uk/sfp/](http://www.cheltenham-group.demon.co.uk/sfp/)

Front cover of John Campion's campaign leaflet for the Beckenham by-election.

1997.



On a trawler from Stornoway Fish Festival.

August 1997.



UK Men's Movement, National Council Meeting, at Tournament Pub, Earls Court. L to R : Ian Kelly, Steve Fitzgerald, Robert Whiston, myself. George McAulay in the background.

Meetings were held on Saturdays. About 1999.



Matt O'Connor, leader of Fathers 4 Justice (F4J), emerging triumphantly from the occupation of the court, as the signs behind him indicate, the Principal Registry of the Family Division, the High Court of Justice, High Holborn, London. There were maybe 50 police in attendance, several press photographers and a few media camera crews. The police included someone with a video camera carefully photographing the crowd of maybe 200 demonstrators. I was in the crowd, and took this photo while police and media cameras looked on.

Friday 13 June 2003.

**THE END**



[inside front cover]

## **The starting point, the theme, and perspectives**

In the first weekend of February 1990, the author was living contentedly. As an academic in computing, with a wife and two children, and comfortably housed in an affluent suburb of Newcastle upon Tyne, he looked forward to this continuing. That weekend, out of the blue, his wife left, driving off in the family car, with their two children. To Bristol, about 350 miles distant.

The ensuing events were to radically change his life, and his views. The following years of the author's life evolved into a remarkable re-appraisal of our society. Along with others, the author recognised the need for changes in society's attitudes, and in the law, including constitutional reform.

## **The subjects and time-scales**

Two strands cover contemporary periods :

- ❖ sketch autobiography, 1947 - 1990;
- ❖ documentary of reforms in family law, 1947 - 2000.

Two further strands cover consecutive periods :

- ❖ personal account of a legal case in matrimonial and family law, 1990 - 1993;
- ❖ documentary of the early years of the men's rights movement, 1990 - 2004.

A final strand covers an undefined period :

- ❖ conjecture on the future, 2004 - .

[inside back cover]

## **The author**

Barry Worrall was born in 1947, educated at the universities of Newcastle upon Tyne and Southampton, initially in science, later in computer science. His career commenced as a software developer with computer manufacturers and users, then for 26 years as lecturer in computing at Northumbria University in Newcastle upon Tyne. He is now retired.

Since 1990 he has been progressively involved in the father's and men's rights movement. In 1994 he attended the inaugural meeting of The Cheltenham Group, a men's rights organisation concerned for family law. He is currently the group's Director.



**Barry Worrall**

[back cover]

## Without Authority by Barry Worrall

### Why this book was written

Fathers 4 Justice has made known some of the failings of family law. Barry Worrall has taken the next step, by exposing the entire degenerate system. He tells us, in an innovative way, what is going on, how this came about, and who has been responsible.



### Significance of this book

It has been said that there would be history books written about this theme. This is the first such book.