



St Ives Chambers

Our Pupils

2012/13

Following on from their first article published earlier in the year—which attempted to introduce aspiring barristers into the world of pupillage—now that they are full-time tenants, Richard Gibbs and Matthew Fiddy have written the final instalment detailing their experiences during their second six at St Ives Chambers.



Richard Gibbs

My second six has been busy and varied. I have done a huge range of work but my focus has been heavily on crime and regulatory work; my first Crown Court appearance was at the end of my first week on my feet in front of a former member of chambers, something that heightened the nerves! It's a big culture change, going from sitting behind someone to being the person who runs the case, makes the decisions and advocates the points but once the nerves take a back seat the enjoyment is huge.

Very quickly once you're on your feet, you realise that pretty much anything can come your way; for me, one day it was prosecuting a list in the magistrates' court - arriving at court as early in the morning as I could, not knowing what was in the list and having to prepare trials and sentences for the day in about an hour - the next it was a sentence or PCMH in the Crown Court, the day after defending someone in a Magistrates' Court trial. Whilst I have overwhelmingly focussed on crime, I have also found myself in the County Court for small claims trials, the FPC for family matters and courts I was previously unaware of - the Lower Tier Tax tribunal for example.

By the conclusion of second six, I was spending most of my time in the Crown Court and have run my own trials and POCA confiscation hearings in the Crown, something that emphasises the learning curve in second six. The clerks are also massively supportive and very soon I came to realise that they really are the engine room of chambers and it's hugely satisfying to see your diary develop as they see where your practice is going and focus on gaining the instructions for you.

Second six has been incredibly busy, there can be a lot of travel and there is a great deal of hard work - much of it late at night when instructions come in at the close of the day for the following day and every day brings new challenges, whether in advocating a point in court, addressing a judge or jury, drafting opinions and orders or holding conferences and delivering training to solicitors. Throughout it all, I've drawn upon the skills I learned in first six and the help and support of chambers generally. It's a busy and occasionally sleepless six months but it's important to enjoy it, which I thoroughly did.



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Second Six



Matthew Fiddy

The first day 'on my feet' is certainly a memory that will remain with me throughout my career. Despite the challenges of the first six months, there is always the security of being able to sit behind someone else and simply observe what is happening in front of you. This is emphatically not the case in second six where all the responsibility is on your shoulders.

That said, the first day in court is the moment that every advocate has trained and waited for over several years and the feeling of conducting your own case is wonderful. It is empowering to know that the client is relying on you for advice and representation. In short it is this experience of excitement coupled with trepidation that essentially defines second six.

The policy at St Ives is that pupils should take on cases in all practice areas. My second six, therefore, has required me to appear in family, civil, and criminal courts, dealing with a wide range of matters. Holding conferences with insurance company representatives one day and then a vulnerable parent in care proceedings the next ensures that you develop new skills and that you learn how to adapt to different situations.

A key advantage of pupillage at St Ives, however, is the approachable nature of members of Chambers. There has always been someone able to answer my questions and offer suggestions on how to tackle particular problems. This invaluable support has assisted me to think about cases in alternative ways. The clerking team is also incredibly helpful and experienced in managing the transition from the first to the second six months. Furthermore, I have benefited from the advice and guidance from my second six pupil supervisor, which has enabled me to start my career at the Bar in the best possible way.