

BOOK REVIEW

CIVIL COURT SERVICE 2016

Editor-in-Chief: Lord Justice Laws

General Editor: Graeme Smith

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PRECISE, DETAILED AND AUTHORITATIVE,
THE NEW 2016 BROWN BOOK IS NOW OUT

An appreciation by Phillip Taylor MBE and Elizabeth Taylor
of Richmond Green Chambers

If you're a civil practitioner fed up to the back teeth with lugging four-volume civil practice books from court to court in a trolley case, day after day, upstairs and down, be mindful that there are other options – and this one from Jordan Publishing is an excellent option. We refer to 'Civil Court Practice 2016', familiarly known as 'The Brown Book'.

If any detailed, precise and highly regarded reference of almost 3,000 pages can be referred to as 'compact' then this is it!

It may be necessarily large, but it's a single volume and it's handy. And as it is used in any number of courts, the practitioner going to court accompanied by 'The Brown Book' can feel confident in the detail of its authority.

Speaking of the proliferation of laws and cases over the years and the dismayingly increasing bulk of those works of reference that must accommodate them, the editorial stance of this book is reassuring in that it anticipates, among other technical developments, the establishment in England and Wales of online courts (OCs).

'It is clear,' comments General Editor Graeme Smith in his introduction, 'that there is likely to be a fundamentally different way of working in the OC with an "initial largely automated interactive triage" stage, followed by "conciliation and management" at Stage 2, and finally "resolution by judges" at Stage 3. It would appear, he adds, that the rules particularly in the first stage are likely to be very different from the CPR.

None of this, however, is likely to happen immediately and when it does, perhaps more paperwork will be generated rather than less. The Briggs Report (which included reference to the inevitability of online courts) was published July 2016. The likelihood is that OCs are still, at this stage, probably three to four years away. Of course, before that day arrives and probably long afterward, the trusty 'Brown Book' will continue to be the organised practitioner's indispensable friend.

This new 2016 edition has been updated to include much new material... too much to list here. But note, for example, that

there have been significant changes to the law relating to housing, resulting mainly from the Deregulation Act 2015 --. and -- of interest to the legal profession -- allegations of misconduct ‘in differing shapes and forms’ which have landed in court.

Presenting the expertise of no less than sixteen expert contributors, the ‘Civil Court Practice’ contains the resources, the materials, the information and the expert commentary that the practitioner is likely to need. The editors have identified those Practice Directions (PDs) that are currently raising concern for the practitioner and as practitioners, we are most grateful for the advice given in this reliable and authoritative work.

Also useful are the lengthy tables of statutes, statutory instruments, cases and practice directions followed by eight sections which provide everything from procedural guides – to the civil procedure rules and practice directions themselves -- to court guides, fees and additional statutory material.

Finally, and this will delight you if you are the typically time pressed practitioner, there’s the ‘Civil Procedure Rules Quick Finder’ at the back, where you will also find the accompanying CD attached to the inside back cover.

Contemporary in outlook and designed to keep you up to date. ‘The Brown Book’ isn’t just a book -- it’s a service -- and very good value too, for busy civil practices.

The publication date is cited as at 2016.