

Speech: Opening of the legal year October 2017

The wheels of justice, they say, turn slowly.

Well, not this morning.

Between the Royal Courts of Justice, the Supreme Court and Westminster Abbey, we have dealt with a very full caseload – and it's still only breakfast time.

As well as opening a new legal year, we have welcomed two exceptional leaders for the senior judiciary. A new Lord Chief Justice, Sir Ian Burnett, and a new President of the Supreme Court, Lady Hale.

We must also say our farewells, to Lord Thomas and Lord Neuberger. They have served the justice system with distinction, dignity and energy.

We have many challenges ahead but I am confident that we have a judiciary eminently well equipped to deal with them. They are fearsomely experienced and rightly independent of the executive – but like all of us here they still need a good breakfast.

So will you please join me in raising a glass in a toast: To the future – and to the past.

And now, as Shakespeare recommended, let us

Do as adversaries in law – strive mightily, but eat and drink as friends.