

News story: Re-appointment of Attorney General for Northern Ireland

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Karen Bradley, today announced the reappointment of Mr John F Larkin QC to the position of Attorney General for Northern Ireland.

The reappointment is for a limited period of 13 months, commencing on 24 May 2019 until 30 June 2020.

The Secretary of State said:

My absolute priority is to see the restoration of the Executive at the earliest opportunity.

In the interim my responsibility is to ensure good governance and stable public services in the best interests of the people of Northern Ireland.

The Attorney General for Northern Ireland is an independent law officer and the Chief legal adviser to the Northern Ireland Executive for both civil and criminal matters. In the absence of an Executive, it is vital that we ensure stability and continuity.

That is why I have extended Mr Larkin's appointment for a further limited period of 13 months.

Mr Larkin's Biography

Mr Larkin was educated at St Mary's Christian Brothers Grammar School and at Queen's University Belfast. He was called to the Bar of Northern Ireland in Michaelmas Term 1986 and later to the Bar of Ireland. Between 1989 and 1991 he was Reid Professor of Criminal Law in Trinity College Dublin.

He took silk in Michaelmas term 2001. Following the transfer of policing and criminal justice powers to Northern Ireland, he was first appointed as Attorney General for Northern Ireland on 24 May 2010 a position he has held since then.

Notes to Editors

The Northern Ireland (Executive Formation and Exercise of Functions) Act 2018 (as amended) provides that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland can

make appointments to the position of Attorney General for Northern Ireland.

The person appointed to this position must be a member of the Bar of Northern Ireland of at least ten years standing or a solicitor of the Court of Judicature of at least ten years standing. There are no restrictions to the number of terms an individual may serve.

Prior to reappointing Mr Larkin, the Secretary of State consulted with the Advocate Media enquiries should be addressed to The Executive Office Press Office Telephone: 028 9037 8151 Email: info@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk

[Press release: Call for volunteers for river clean up in Otley](#)

A volunteer day is being held on Thursday 16 May, from 10am until 3pm, to help with litter picking, vegetation and tree management along the River Wharfe.

In partnership with the Environment Agency and Leeds City Council, the River Stewardship Company is running the volunteer day as part of preparations ahead of works on flood defences in the town. Consultants WSP are also taking part in the event.

The town suffered flooding on three occasions between November and December 2015, which saw 74 properties affected. The government is investing £2 million in a scheme to reduce the risk of flooding to homes and businesses.

Leader of Leeds City Council, Councillor Judith Blake said:

Effective stewardship is a key element of maintaining a healthy river system as well as crucially reducing the threat of flooding, which communities in and around Otley continue to be vulnerable to. Volunteer days like this are a great way of helping the community, meeting new people and carrying out a really important task so I hope everyone taking part enjoys their day.

John Woods, flood risk officer with the Environment Agency said:

We've been really impressed with the high levels of attendance and involvement at community drop in events to help to shape our proposals for the Otley Flood Alleviation Scheme. The last volunteer day was a great success and hope that people will come out in force again, and show how much the people of Otley love their waterfront.

Jacob Batt at scheme consultants WSP said:

These clean up days are a great way for organisations like WSP to volunteer and give something back to the local community and so we are very keen to continue to support and take part in these events.

The flood defence scheme is being led by Leeds City Council working closely with the Environment Agency. So far the project team has carried out environmental assessments, gathered information for a hydraulic report and an economic appraisal for the scheme and completed assessments of structures, geotechnical, drainage, highways, and utilities.

Outline designs for the scheme are now being developed. The next steps include submitting an outline business case for the scheme, seeking planning permission and finally developing a detailed design before construction can begin.

The options include using flood defence walls, flood defence embankments, maintenance including vegetation clearance and riverbank realignment.

Once the final scheme has been chosen from the shortlist of four, construction work should begin in autumn 2019. The Otley Flood Alleviation Scheme is one of several schemes that is adopting a catchment-wide approach. This means the entire River Wharfe catchment area will be considered to help reduce flood risk. This approach looks at a combination of natural processes and engineered options to help slow the flow and catch water further up the catchment so that flood peaks are reduced further downstream.

If you can give some time to help with the volunteer day, or would like further information, please contact Sarah Emberson at the River Stewardship Company at Sarah.emberson@the-rsc.co.uk or 07766 352932.

All personal protective wear will be provided on the day, but please come in suitable clothing and sturdy footwear.

A further volunteer day is being planned for 13 June.

If you have any queries about the scheme, please email frm@leeds.gov.uk

[Press release: Syria: E3 statement on the escalation of hostilities in Idlib](#)

France, Germany and the United Kingdom are gravely concerned by the current escalation of hostilities in north-western Syria. Over recent days, the civilian population in the region has been under heavy shelling by the Syrian

regime and Russia, with daily aerial raids and bombardments, while the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and other terrorist groups designated by the UN have intensified their attacks. This military escalation must stop.

Over the last weeks, the violence has resulted in the death of more than 120 civilians. Airstrikes on population centers, indiscriminate bombardment and use of barrel bombs as well as the targeting of civilian and humanitarian infrastructures, notably schools and health facilities, are blatant violations of International Humanitarian Law. We condemn these in the strongest terms. It is particularly worrying that at least in some cases these attacks happened despite the fact that the coordinates were communicated to ensure the safety of these locations.

The sizeable presence of UN-designated terrorist groups in northwestern Syria, including ISIS and al-Qaeda affiliates, remains of grave concern. However, the current brutal offensive by the Syrian regime and its backers on millions of civilians living in the area is not about fighting terrorism. It is about pushing forward the ruthless reconquest by the regime.

This violence only adds to the dire suffering of the Syrian people in the Idlib and Hama region. Large numbers of civilians have been forced to flee their homes due to the escalation, with reports of more than 180,000 newly displaced persons over the last two weeks. This region is home to three million civilians, including one million children. Many of them have already been displaced several times due to the brutality of the Syrian regime. Any military offensive in this densely populated region would lead to a humanitarian and security disaster.

Therefore, we urge all the parties to avoid any military offensive in the region and abide by their commitments to de-escalate violence in Idlib. In Istanbul, the heads of state and government of Russia, Turkey, Germany and France committed themselves to a lasting ceasefire in Idlib while underlining the necessity of fully implementing the measures foreseen in the Russian-Turkish agreement. This is paramount, to ensure the protection of civilians and safe and unhindered humanitarian access to alleviate their suffering.

Such escalation jeopardizes the prospect of a lasting political settlement. Only a credible, negotiated political solution, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2254, can end the conflict in Syria.

[Press release: Call to save judge's copy of Lady Chatterley's Lover used in famous obscenity trial](#)

- Annotated work contains notes made by wife of judge who oversaw famous

1960 obscenity trial.

- Temporary export bar has been issued to try to keep the copy in the country.

The annotated copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* used by the judge who presided over the 1960 obscenity trial is at risk of leaving the UK unless a buyer can be found to match the £56,250 asking price.

Lady Chatterley's Lover was D. H. Lawrence's final novel before his death in 1930. While it was published privately in Florence in 1928 and in France the following year, the book was not published in full in Britain until 1960 due to fear of prosecution. Its eventual publication led to the trial in which this particular copy played a significant role.

The book was owned by Sir Laurence Byrne, the judge who presided over the now famous obscenity trial. It contains annotations and two pages of notes with a list of page numbers with short content summaries. The principal hand is that of Byrne's wife Dorothy, who had studied the book and prepared a list of the pages she had annotated. Later notes have been made by the judge himself during the trial. Dorothy also sewed a blue-grey fabric bag for her husband to carry the book to and from court.

In 1960, Penguin Books decided to publish the uncensored work to test the 1959 Obscene Publications Act, which was designed to protect works of literature while strengthening laws against pornography. Potentially obscene works could now be published if they were of literary merit or contributed to the public good.

The trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was a sensation with the acquittal of Penguin viewed as a landmark moment in cultural history. The trial's drama, its class tensions and its explicit references to sex captured the public's attention. After the trial, Penguin quickly sold 3 million copies.

Arts Minister Michael Ellis said:

The trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* captured the public attention in 1960. It was a watershed moment in cultural history, when Victorian ideals were overtaken by a more modern attitude. I hope that a buyer can be found to keep this important part of our nation's history in the UK.

Chairman of the RCEWA, Sir Hayden Phillips, said:

The prosecution of Penguin Books for publishing *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was one of the most important criminal trials of the 20th century. Judge Byrne's copy of the novel, annotated by him and his wife, may be the last surviving contemporary 'witness' who took part in the proceedings.

Picture the scene: the High Court Judge presiding in his red robes, his wife beside him on the Bench (as was allowed in those days) as a succession of singular and distinguished witnesses for the Defence were cross examined day by day. I was 17 at the time and studying a DH Lawrence as a set text for A Levels – it was not Lady Chatterley’s Lover, but at least I could follow the riveting course of the trial in the daily papers. It would be more than sad, it would be a misfortune, if this last surviving ‘witness’ left our shores.

The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest (RCEWA) made its recommendation on the grounds that the departure of the book from the UK would be a misfortune because of its close connection to our history and national life.

The decision on the export licence application for the book will be deferred until 9 August 2019. This may be extended until 9 October 2019 if a serious intention to raise funds to purchase the item is made at the recommended price of £56,250.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- Organisations or individuals interested in purchasing the items should contact the RCEWA on 0845 300 6200. □
- Details of the book are as follows: □ DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE, 1885-1930 LADY CHATTERLEY’S LOVER HARMONDSWORTH: PENGUIN, 1960, first impression 8vo, original decorated paper wrappers, THE JUDGE’S COPY FROM THE 1960 OBSCENITY TRIAL, ANNOTATED FOR HIM BY HIS WIFE, c.118 pages containing pencil markings, underlining, and occasional marginal notes (names of characters etc.), also with a list of significant passages (“love making”, “coarse”, etc.) with page numbers loosely inserted (four pages, 8vo, on headed stationery of the Central Criminal Court), housed in a blue-grey damask bag with blue ribbon tie, spine chipped at foot, text block partially detached from spine, paper clip with rust mark on lower wrapper
- Provenance: It belonged to the family of the judge who originally owned the book until sold at Sotheby’s, London, 13 December 1993, lot 137 where bought by Christopher Cone & Stanley J Seeger until sold at Sotheby’s, London, 30 October 2018, lot 159
- The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest is an independent body, serviced by The Arts Council, which advises the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria. □

- The Arts Council champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. It supports a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. www.artscouncil.org.uk.□
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Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Russia – January 2020

2019 FCO, Pre-posting preparation 2017 to 2019 FCO Director-General Economic and Global Issues, and Trustee of the British Council (2015-2019) 2014 to 2016 FCO, Chief Operating Officer 2011 to 2014 Harare, Her Majesty's Ambassador 2008 to 2011 FCO, Director, Prosperity, and G8 Foreign Affairs Sous-Sherpa 2006 to 2008 FCO, Head of Department, Europe Directorate 2005 to 2006 School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies, University of London 2002 to 2005 Moscow, Economic and Trade Counsellor 1999 to 2001 FCO, Deputy Head, Southern European Department 1995 to 1999 European Commission, Cabinet of Commissioner Kinnock