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Press Notice

Book celebrates UK Supreme Court story

An important new book, *The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom*, (Merrell Publishers), celebrates the historic creation of the Supreme Court, giving fascinating insights into its establishment and telling the story of the refurbishment of Middlesex Guildhall.

Sensitive renovation between 2007 and 2009 transformed a historic Grade II* listed building, originally built as the headquarters of Middlesex County Council. Many original features were restored and brought back to full splendour. It also secured Middlesex Guildhall's long-term future as the home of the Supreme Court, a modern institution on an international stage.

On 1 October 2009, the Court came into existence and its Justices were sworn in under the gaze of the world's media. It was officially opened later that month by Her Majesty The Queen, at an event attended by senior judges from around the world, leading politicians and others dignitaries from the UK.

The book, edited by esteemed architectural historian Chris Miele, contains a number of pieces and essays by eminent judges, including current Justices of the Court and other distinguished contributors who bring the history of the highest Court in the UK to life. This vibrant and colourful publication also explores the history and architecture of the building, including its decorative arts, has a wealth of information on its highly symbolic location in world-famous Parliament Square, and discusses the symbolism of court architecture around the world.

Lady Hale, who was heavily involved in the project to establish the Supreme Court, describes the history of the building and its associations with the law. The site of the building has been directly linked with the law for nearly a millennium. Lord Bingham, former Senior Law Lord, provides insights into the history of the Law Lords and their transition into Supreme Court Justices, and His Honour Fabyan Evans contributes a memoir of its time as a busy Crown Court centre.

Illustrated with sumptuous, specially commissioned photography by Tim Imrie, as well as maps and plans, the book also contains a Foreword by Lord Phillips, President of the Court, and a Prologue by The Rt. Hon Jack Straw MP, Justice Secretary and Lord Chancellor.

Establishing the Court created an unequivocal separation between the legislature and the judiciary and was a major milestone in constitutional reform. It also made the UK's highest court more accessible to the public. The Court is the only one in the UK where proceedings are routinely filmed.

Lord Phillips said: “The creation of a Supreme Court is a great event in the history of the constitution of the United Kingdom, and it is right that it should be marked by the publication of this book.”

Lady Hale said: “The object of this book is to celebrate the Guildhall in all its glory, its place on Parliament Square, its past, its present and its future.”

Notes to editors

- When Westminster City Council gave Listed Building consent for the refurbishment of Middlesex Guildhall as a home for the Supreme Court, a condition imposed was that a book be produced to chart the history of the building,
- *The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom*, is published by Merrell, ISBN 978-1-8589-4507-1. www.merrellpublishers.com
- Established through the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, the Supreme Court hears civil appeal cases from England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, as well as criminal appeal cases from England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It took over the devolution jurisdiction of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC). The JCPC continues to be the final court of appeal for certain Commonwealth countries and other jurisdictions, such as Crown Dependencies.
- The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom replaced the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords.

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