

The Fingerprint Inquiry | Scotland

17 September 2009

The Fingerprint Inquiry announces second stage of oral evidence hearings

The public inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the Shirley McKie fingerprint case will begin its second session of hearing evidence on 22nd September 2009 at Maryhill Community Central Hall, Glasgow.

The Fingerprint Inquiry, chaired by Sir Anthony Campbell, was set up to look at the steps which were taken to identify and verify the fingerprints associated with the case of HM Advocate v McKie in 1999. The Inquiry will determine the consequences of steps taken, report on findings of fact and make recommendations.

On 22nd September, it is anticipated that Senior Counsel to the Inquiry will make a brief introductory statement outlining the anticipated duration and structure of this series of hearings and also the nature of the comparative exercise in which the Inquiry has been engaged over the summer (see notes to editors below). The Inquiry will then proceed to oral evidence, with the main focus for the first few weeks of these hearings concerning opinions about various finger marks with which the Inquiry is concerned.

The first witness is expected to be Mr Pat Wertheim from the USA who was instructed by Shirley McKie and David Asbury. It is anticipated that he will give evidence over Tuesday and Wednesday. The next witness is expected to be Geoffrey Grigg, formerly a fingerprint officer at the National Training Centre for Scientific Support to Crime Investigation at Durham (NTC) (now part of the National Policing Improvement Agency).

A daily progress report will be published on the Inquiry website giving information about the witnesses that day and a list of who is scheduled to appear the following day. The Inquiry website www.thefingerprintinquiryscotland.org.uk will be updated throughout the Inquiry with daily hearing transcripts, key documents and a timetable for witness hearings.

In addition, on 21st September documents relevant to the opinion evidence that will be heard over these next weeks of hearings will be placed on the website. This will include the contributions to the comparative exercise and Counsel's analysis of this material.

Notes to editors

1. The hearings will take place at Maryhill Community Central Hall, 304 Maryhill Road, Glasgow, G20 7YE, starting at 10am. Hearings will normally be held four days a week (Tuesday-Friday). The Inquiry will not sit on Friday 25th September as the Hall is closed for the Glasgow holiday.
2. Media wishing to attend the hearings will be required to register daily at the Inquiry Office adjacent to the entrance to the Maryhill Community Central Hall. No broadcast or photography will be allowed within the venue. Further information about the Inquiry can be found in the media pack at:
<http://www.thefingerprintinquiryscotland.org.uk/inquiry/121.101.html>
3. The Fingerprint Inquiry is a public inquiry set up under the Inquiries Act 2005, its terms of reference are:
 - To inquire into the steps that were taken to identify and verify the fingerprints associated with, and leading up to, the case of *HM Advocate v. McKie* in 1999.
 - To determine, in relation to the fingerprint designated Y7, the consequences of the steps taken or not taken.
 - To report findings of fact and make recommendations as to what measures might now be introduced, beyond those that have already been introduced since 1999, to ensure that any shortcomings are avoided in the future.
4. A comparative exercise has been in progress since July by reference to a common set of images of finger marks Y7 and the part of Q12 attributed to Marion Ross. Primary contributions were obtained from the four main

SCRO witnesses (Hugh Macpherson, Charles Stewart, Fiona McBride and Anthony McKenna) and four other fingerprint experts Ian Macleod, Geoffrey Grigg, Pat Wertheim and Arie Zeelenberg. Their respective contributions were then circulated for comment by the others who had provided primary contributions and also by a number of other practitioners.

5. Daily progress can be found at:

<http://www.thefingerprintinquiryscotland.org.uk/inquiry/39.html>

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