SPTL Annual Conference 1998

The theme of the Society for Public Teachers of Law’s conference this year, which is taking place during 8–11 September at Hulme Hall, University of Manchester, is ‘Human Rights and Legal Traditions’.

The plenary sessions on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning will include contributions by the speakers listed below:

Lord Williams of Mostyn: Human rights brought home; Dr Joseph Jaconelli, University of Manchester: Human rights brought home – an alternative perspective; Professor Andrew von Hirsch, Institute of Criminology, Cambridge: Television surveillance and privacy in public space; Professor Shahin Sardar Ali, University of Peshawar: Islam and human rights; Mrs Justice Hale: Children are humans too; Professor Katherine O’Donovan, Queen Mary & Westfield College, London: Engendering rights within legal traditions; Professor lan Kennedy, University College, London: Human rights in the curriculum.

In addition to the plenary sessions, a wide number of specialist subject sections are meeting. The following groups meet on Tuesday and Wednesday:

• Contract & commercial law;
• Criminal justice;
• Environmental law;
• EC law;
• Family law;
• Jurisprudence;
• Labour law;
• Media law;
• Medical law;
• Practice, the profession and ethics;
• Property and trusts; and
• Tort.

While the following groups meet on Thursday and Friday:

• Company law;
• Comparative public law;
• Comparative private law;
• Consumer law;
• Intellectual property law;
• Legal history;
• Maritime law;
• Public law; and
• Restitution.

The programme for the subject section groups is a very detailed one and, in a brief review, it is only possible to pick out a few contributions. Labour Law contains a number of topical contributions, including material on the proposals in the recent White Paper Fairness at Work, and a contribution from Stephanie Palmer (Cambridge) which deals with the implications of the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Further human rights issues will be discussed in the Criminal Justice group, where Professor Tony Smith (Cambridge) will speak on The Human Rights Act in action. The theme will be developed by Steve Uglow (Kent – Article 8 and surveillance’), Sybil Sharpe (de Montfort – Article 6 and disclosure) and Professor Andrew Ashworth (Oxford – Article 6 and fairness of trials).

The EC law sessions include two contributions on state liability – Thinking the unthinkable? State liability for judicial act after Factortame III from Helen Toner (Oxford) and ‘The complementary relationship between enforcement procedures of Articles 169/171 ECT and the state liability principle’ from Annie Bonnie (Exeter). In a further EC contribution Peter Cullen, from Edinburgh, poses the question ‘Controlling European: mission impossible?’

Christine Piper (Brunel) asks ‘How do you define a family lawyer?’, and a number of other Family law contributors also ask questions which reflect social policy issues. Examples include May Hibbs (Staffordshire) with The weight attached by the affluent to their perception of the legal consequences of marriage, and Katherine Wright (Sheffield) on Negotiating mental divorce: solicitor and working class divorce.

A strong company law offering includes The Hon Mrs Justice Mary Arden on Company law initiatives and the Law Commission and Diana Faber on Reforming partnership law. Paul Davies (LSE) assesses Corporate governance: the future developments in EC law.

This is a very brief summary of a few contributions in what is a very full programme. For further information about the conference contact Shirley Tiffany, SPTL Conference Co-ordinator, Faculty of Law, University of Manchester M13 9PL (Tel: 0161 275 7556; Email: shirley.tiffany@man.ac.uk).