The Membership Papers

Membership of The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences enables communication and collaboration with fellow practitioners and offers a rich range of benefits. The Society is the Professional Body for individuals working within the field of forensic science, bringing together forensic practitioners, academics and researchers across the UK and worldwide.

Our members are our asset, our key to development across all disciplines of forensic science, our voice for the future in the UK and worldwide. With over 2,500 members including forensic professionals, students and enthusiasts, we believe that the larger the pool of forensic expertise, the richer the communication and collaboration, thus leading to effective sharing of best practice and research findings and subsequent progression within the various fields of forensic science.

Membership of the Society is a journey that can begin at any stage of a career in forensic science.

In this issue of interfaces we thought we would remind our members of all the great benefits membership of the Society can offer.

Tim Thompson
Editor in Chief
‘The Membership Papers’
An insight into the key benefits of Membership of The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences...

Chapter I – Student (undergraduate) Membership

Student (undergraduate) membership is the first step to take towards a career in forensic science, it establishes the scene at the crucial beginnings of a student’s career giving the opportunity to add to knowledge and expertise through a range of benefits such as: free subscriptions to online publications (Science & Justice and CSEye); crucial networking opportunities at a range of conferences with reduced rates; essential discounts to Wiley Books; key insights into new developments within the field of forensic science; and opens doors to a range of careers via our jobs and careers section on our website. These benefits continue throughout the membership journey, bringing added value along the way...

Chapter II – Associate or Affiliate Membership?...That is the Question...

Further development of your expertise within forensic science can be established through Associate or Affiliate membership of the Society. Associate membership is open to those who have graduated from either a Chartered Society accredited degree programme or a non-accredited forensic science degree programme deemed acceptable by the Society. Affiliate membership is ideal for those who have just embarked on a career within the field of forensic science and wish to enrich their professional experience or for individuals who simply have a keen interest in the subject. In particular, Associate membership allows members to use the post nominal ACSFS, indicating Associate Member of the Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences, this is the first step towards full professional membership and is recognised by organisations in the UK and worldwide. Associate and Affiliate membership status demonstrates engagement and commitment to forensic science and adds credibility within the field.

Chapter III – The Professionals

Membership status then turns a new page...having developed and honed professional experience, after three years of practice within the field of forensic science, Professional status beckons. Currently the Society has a rich variety of Professional members including academics (trainers, lecturers, professors...), Forensic Practitioners, Managers... Professional membership is sealed with the post nominal MCSFS, indicating Professional membership of the Society, an official status recognised by organisations in the UK and worldwide. And last but not least, another great incentive for Professionals is that they can have their voice heard with full voting rights on Society issues and they may opt to serve on the Society Council.

For more information on how to become a member of the Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences please go to www.charteredsocietyofforensicciences.org/Membership/Join. You can also contact our Membership team via email @ membership@csofs.org or call 01423 506 068.
Chapter IV – Accredited Forensic Practitioner (AcFP)

Can you answer the following three questions? 1. Do you regularly attend court? 2. Can you demonstrate continuing professional development (CPD) for three years? 3. Have you demonstrated your competence in your particular specialist subject? If the answer is YES, then you could achieve Accredited Forensic Practitioner (AcFP) status which indicates competency as a forensic practitioner who can be considered as an expert. This expertise is underpinned by qualifications, experience and a commitment to CPD to ensure up-to-date knowledge and skills in practice. Accredited members can have their name held on the Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences Register of Accredited Forensic Practitioners - a public searchable register. Having your name on the Register provides public confidence and greater assurance to the courts and the Criminal Justice System. Accredited Forensic Practitioner status confers the right to use the post nominal AcFP.

Chapter V – Fellowship

This is the most distinguished category of professional membership available to existing professional members. To apply for Fellowship you must have been a professional member (MCSFS) for at least three years. It is reserved for those individuals who have demonstrated outstanding qualifications and/or experience, and have made a significant contribution to their relevant area of forensic practice. Fellows of the Society are entitled to use the post-nominal FCSFS, indicating Fellowship of the Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences. Fellows of the Society can continuously contribute to creating a legacy of outstanding achievement within the field of forensic science.

Afterword

In addition to the benefits mentioned earlier, Professional (including AcFP and Fellowship) members have access to a members only area of the website; an opportunity to attain qualifications such as the Certificate of Professional Competence; consultation on professional matters; and reduced rates for CRC Press and FORENSICnetBASE (online handbooks and references) and Society events. Professional members can also take advantage of tailor made insurance packages to cover Professional Indemnity and liability for forensic research, consultancy and expert witness work. Details of these offers are available at the website or keep reading for more information.

The only question left to ask now is – which chapter of the membership journey will you open today?

For more information on how to become a member of the Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences please go to www.charteredsocietyofforensicsciences.org/Membership/Join. Email @ membership@csofs.org or call 01423 506 068.
As promised in the last issue of interfaces, we have reviewed the results of the members survey and are delighted to give you an overview of the highlights and our response.

Once again thank you to all those members who took part.

The main benefits of membership of CSFS were seen to be the publications, particularly Science & Justice, attendance at conferences and events and the networking opportunities they offer, continued professional development in the forms of post graduate qualification, CPD courses and the accreditation of university courses.

Overall membership benefits rated well with over 70% classing them as good or excellent.

Members noted that they preferred now receiving communications from CSFS by email so we are now able to send out our publications links this way as all CSFS publications are now electronic.

When asked for ideas of how we could serve the members better, more one day, targeted events and training were high on the list and this is something CSFS is working towards. Upcoming examples of focused events include the Fire Investigation conference in September and the Post Graduate symposium in November.

For details visit the website http://www.charteredsocietyofforensicsciences.org/Events/2015

One of the key areas members felt needed work was the website and database CSFS are pleased to announce a full redevelopment of the website which will go live this summer. We hope these developments will all help for a better overall membership experience and help us support you more effectively.

The new website will be more user friendly and easier to navigate. We have introduced basket shopping for all events with increased range of payment options. There will be an increased range of activities attracting CPD points and it will be much easier to log CPD points, with all points gained directly from CSFS activities being updated automatically. Access to all publications will be by simple click through.
In addition CSFS has now developed a model to allow the development of a wide range of Certificates of Professional Competence (CoPC). This year is likely to be the last year of running the Society Diplomas. The main reason for this is that the forensic education and training environment has changed so significantly in the last decade that CSFS needs to react to stay ahead of the game. Twenty years ago most CSIs were not graduates and so as they progressed in their careers they reached a stage where they needed relevant qualifications to allow them to move up the career ladder.

Quite simply things have changed – more and more graduates are entering the profession, hundreds of university based graduate programmes are available and now competence to do your role is becoming the key focus. CSFS has found that the numbers of those registered to take the diplomas has now reduced to only a few per subject per year and there has been a surge in interest in the subject specific Certificates of Competence.

The Society has established CoPCs in the following Forensic disciplines

- Podiatry
- Gait analysis
- Footwear

The following will run for the first time before the end of the year

- Firearms legal classification
- Firearms function testing
- Ballistic comparison microscopy
- Firearms discharge residue

The following are now in development and all should launch within the next twelve months.

- Vehicle collision investigation
- Blood Pattern analysis
- CCTV
- CSI
- Forensic Explosives analysis
- Forensic Radiography

CSFS see that this is an incredibly important area for the Society, its members and the wider forensic community and so we are keen to hear from anyone interested at looking at developments in their chosen field, especially if you wish to get involved.

Along with this CSFS launched the Pre Employment Assessment of Competence (PEAC) this year. This one day skills based certificate is designed to help those members who are recent graduates showcase their skills to prospective employers and bridge the gap between education and the workplace.

Increased CPD and CPC were also listed and CSFS has been working on this on your behalf.

Our list of CPD approved external courses is constantly under review and being expanded. To view the full list of CPD training and events visit [http://www.charteredsocietyofforensicsciences.org/CPD](http://www.charteredsocietyofforensicsciences.org/CPD)
New Coat of Arms for The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences

We are delighted to be able to present to you the Society’s Grant of Arms issued by the Lord Lyon, King of Arms, Dr Joseph Morrow.

It is a great honour to be able to bear Arms and something the Society should be very proud of. You may be interested to learn a little about the meaning of the various components.

The arms themselves are referred to as the Armorial Bearings – this is the full Coat of Arms which we are entitled to display. Armorial bearings consist of:
the Shield, bearing the basic device;
the Helmet and Crest;
occasionally, two Supporters on either side of the shield;
the Mantling or cape and the Motto in a scroll.

All bodies can seek a grant of shield (and crest) which is what we already had. However only those organisations established by Royal Charter or Acts of Parliament are entitled to seek a Grant of Supporters.

From an heraldic perspective, the choice of components is somewhat limited. However in designing the full Coat of Arms we have attempted to incorporate elements that reflect the work and principles of the Society and have included the existing shield of the original Arms into the new design. The two hands within the original shield represent the prosecution and defence and the colours are as described in the original Grant.

As supporters we have the Owl and the Lynx which represent wisdom and liberty respectively, both wear collars comprised of a double helix. On top of the shield is the helmet from which hangs the mantling, originally made from linen (or similar) and meant to keep the sun off the wearer’s armour in hot weather. This is painted in the principal colour of the Arms. On top of that sits the Crest which is bound to it by what is known as a “wreath of the colours” (a twist of cloth which is part of the mantling).

The scales of course represent Justice, surrounded by a wreath of holly which stands for truth.

We are seeking approval for use in England and Wales from the York Herald.
Become a Link Member

Are you a member of the Society, and looking for a way to get more involved?

Are you able to put in some extra time to help support and promote the Society?

Do you have ideas for how to develop the Society?

If you answered yes to these questions, then becoming a Link Person may be perfect for you. We are actively recruiting members of the Society who would like to be the Link Person for their organisation. The role includes:

- Proactively promoting Society events and activities
- Encouraging colleagues to become members of the Society
- Sharing your ideas for the development of the Society
- Reporting back to the Society on membership numbers and issues from your Organisation

In addition to being able to play a more active role in the Society, Link members will also benefit from incentive discounts.

The strength of the Society depends on its members, and the Link People play a key role in keeping the Society connected with members and organisations.

If you would like to know if your organisation has a Link Person, or if you are interested in becoming a Link yourself, please email membership@csofs.org

Continuing Professional Development

The society has endeavoured to provide opportunities for professional development since it was founded in 1959 and continues to strive to expand our CPD offering to our members.

All Society conferences, seminars, lectures and workshops are CPD approved along with a variety of external approved courses, which we are building on all the time.

Check out the Society CPD approved courses on our website
http://www.charteredsocietyofforensicsciences.org/CPD/ApprovedCourses
The CSFS Dr Ann Priston Award for Excellence in Casework

We are pleased to announce the launch of a new award

“I became a forensic scientist almost by default – having spent three years as a medical Laboratory Technician, six years at University, a spell in the USA (and even a very short spell as a nurse) I had to consider what to do with my newly acquired PhD. I didn’t want to teach, didn’t fancy going in to industry but wanted to carry on with a scientific career so that really only left the law. So in the summer of 1970 I applied and was accepted for a position as a Scientific Officer at the Metropolitan Police Forensic Science Laboratory.

From the very first morning it was clear to me that forensic science was the right path for me and from then until I finally retired in 2007 I never for a moment regretted the decision. All of my time was spent as a case worker – even the prospect of a promotion wasn’t enough to lure me away from the bench and the court room.

It isn’t surprising then that when I was thinking of a suitably modest legacy following my hand over after 5 years as President of the professional body my thoughts turned to the practitioners and to what I might do to reward dedication and excellence in casework.

In offering this award my hope is that it will go some way to acknowledging and thanking one of the most vital players in the Criminal Justice System. My very very best wishes to you all. “

Dr Ann Priston OBE spent 38 years as an operational forensic scientist, 30 of those years spent on cases involving textile fibres, eventually focussing on cases of armed robbery and mainland IRA terrorism. She has always been passionately committed to quality in casework and holds 16 commendations from police, CPS and Judges including one from the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. As President of The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences she has tried to promote the recognition of practitioners and acknowledgement of their contribution to criminal trials. This award is intended to encourage and reward scientists who have excelled in their commitment to casework and the courts.

Criteria:
The entrant must be a professional Member or Fellow of the Society. They should be nominated and seconded by their employers, senior officer or colleagues for their outstanding contribution to casework. The nominee must be an operational forensic scientist working as a reporting officer, assistant/examiner. The nominator is asked to submit a synopsis and any other supporting evidence, together with the details requested below, saying why they deserve this award.

Judging:
Entries should be submitted on the form downloaded via the following link:
http://www.charteredsocietyofforensicsciences.org/Awards/The%20Dr%20Ann%20Piston%20Award
and sent to diploma@csofs.org by close of business on the 31st July.

All entries received by the closing date will be assessed by a panel of operational Forensic Practitioners selected from The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences list of registered assessors. The winner will be notified by the end of September. The Society’s decision is final. The winner will receive a cheque for £150 and a 24 hour package to attend the CSFS Autumn conference. They will also be invited to receive their certificate and award from Dr Priston at the CSFS Awards Dinner.
CSFS Awards

One of the many benefits of being a member of The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences are the awards and competitions offered to our members annually. As the professional body we encourage all members to participate in these activities.

The awards offered cover both those members in education and those in practice.

The Society looks to recognise the continuing commitment to forensic science by its members through these awards.

Research Scholarship
The Society Research Scholarship, up to a maximum of £3,000 per annum, is offered to appropriately qualified candidates for a maximum period of 3 years for their research in various fields.

The Criteria:
The Scholarship is open to members of the Society, who wish to undertake research based on scientific methods in one of the following areas: forensic science, criminal justice, forensic science policy and practice, forensic medicine or crime investigation based on scientific methods. Candidates should have a first or upper second class honours degree or have sufficient and relevant professional experience deemed acceptable to the Society. The research must be carried out at an institute or organisation accepted by the Council of the Society and under the direction of a person approved by the Society.

The Award:
The Scholarship will be awarded to a successful candidate(s) on an annual basis which may be extended to a maximum period of three years. Recipients of the Scholarship are required to prepare a final report of their work at the end of their research period to which the Scholarship applies. Award recipients are encouraged to publish their results in Interfaces, Science & Justice, CSEye or as a poster/presentation at a Society conference. The financial support of the Society must be acknowledged in all publications and thesis arising from the funded research.

For more information visit:
http://www.charteredsocietyofforensicsciences.org/Awards/ResearchScholarships
The Joint Presidents’ Award

Nominations are now open for the Joint President’s Award

**The Criteria:**
The candidate must be a member of the Society or the California Association of Criminalists.

The candidate must have fewer than six years professional experience: (any full time paid employment as a forensic scientist or equivalent position). They must demonstrate a significant contribution to the Criminal Justice System in the exercise of one of the professions in membership of the Society.

Examples of such a contribution might include:
- research disseminated in the form of a publication (eg journal or newsletter) presentation for a project or a seminar, or delivered at a workshop or study group;
- casework which provided a significant contribution to the investigation or adjudication of one or more cases;
- sustained level of expertise in casework;
- contribution to the collection, preservation and presentation of evidence in Court;
- any significant contributions to the improved application of forensic science within the Criminal Justice System.

Nominations for achievement against a background of personal difficulty, such as illness or handicap, by a young member of the Society would also be considered.

*For further information and to nominate visit:*
http://www.charteredsocietyofforensicsscience.org/Awards/JointPresident

PW Allen Award

The PW Allen award is presented to the most meritorious paper published in Science & Justice each year.

*The PW Allen Award is given in memory of Phillip W Allen. Phillip W Allen was Vice President of the Society from 1976-1978. Phillip was instrumental in bringing to market the first micro cameras. These were first used by the Metropolitan Police in the Spaghetti House Siege in the late 70’s. The company continues to manufacture and sell a range of anti-terrorism equipment. They include explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) bomb search and detection; bomb technician tools; and Electronic Counter Measures (ECM) equipment used to stop remote detonation of bombs.*

The award winner is an “Editor’s choice” as chosen by the Honorary Editor of the Society’s Journal and ratified by the Council of the Society. The “Editor’s choice” is chosen from research publications published in Science &Justice within a given year considered using the following criteria:

- Impact of the work on forensic science
- Novelty of the research
- Quality of the science

*For further information visit:*
http://www.charteredsocietyofforensicsscience.org/Awards/PWAllen
Most Meritorious Student Awards

The Society wishes to recognise the achievement of the most meritorious student in an accredited undergraduate degree programme or any other postgraduate degree programme in forensic science or related topic. Universities are asked to nominate one student for each of these awards.

Most Meritorious Undergraduate Award
The prize includes:
1 year’s free student membership of the Society, Framed certificate presented at the Society’s Autumn Conference, £100 Book token

Most Meritorious Postgraduate Award
The prize includes:
1 year’s free membership of the Society (Affiliate/Associate), Framed certificate presented at the Society's Autumn Conference, £100 Book token
Kindly sponsored by Tercethouse

Conditions
In order for the student to be eligible for consideration for the Society awards, candidates must have attained either:
An undergraduate (BSc or MSci) degree which is accredited by the Society.
or
An instructional MSc degree, the title of which contains the word "forensic" and the content of which contains a significant forensic element as judged by the award adjudicators.

For further information visit:
http://www.charteredsocietyofforensicsciences.org/Awards/StudentPrizes

The Society Award to Accredited University Students
Each Accredited University has the opportunity to nominate a student from one of their undergraduate or postgraduate accredited courses for an award of their choice.

The award recipient from each university will then receive a Certificate to be presented to them by their university.
The award recipient will receive a free place at the student conference for that year.

For further information visit:
http://www.charteredsocietyofforensicsciences.org/Awards/AccreditedUniversityAward
Following the December issue of interfaces The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences has been working with the Higher Education Academy (HEA), the UK Forensic Science Education Group (UKFSEG), Staffordshire University and Jorum on a collaborative venture to deliver an online searchable undergraduate and post graduate research database. We are pleased to announce the launch of this excellent and valuable resource.

Making Student Forensic-Based Research Available to the Wider Community
Bolton-King, R.S.; Cassella, J.C.; Rankin, B.W.J and Burke, S.

We are delighted to be launching this exciting new initiative, a free open access tool created for practitioners, professionals and academics to collaborate and disseminate research internationally. Jorum is a searchable online, open-access repository of undergraduate and postgraduate (non-PhD) forensic-based research.

This bank of research, aims to provide a valuable resource of information and intelligence, which was previously inaccessible to caseworkers and forensic science providers (police and commercial). This repository also serves to:

- Provide a platform of institutional collaborations and networks across academia and industry;
- Support research and development strategy in the forensic arena;
- Provide opportunity to facilitate the use of standard approaches to the research and in doing so make the data generated more robust for its use in the courts;
- Minimise research repetition and build larger statistically valid datasets for use and application to support casework;
- Provide an easy searchable database for a wide range of forensic related topics as part of student projects.

The repository is hosted and accessible through an educational resource sharing organisation, Jorum (http://find.jorum.ac.uk/).

Higher Education Institutions (HEI) can register (for free) with Jorum to upload appropriate theses that meet fixed criteria (see ‘Criteria for Submission of Thesis’) and are protected under a Creative Commons License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/).

The FAQs section of the ‘Criteria for Submission of Thesis’ document contains further information. The success of this database lies with the engagement of HEIs to submit appropriate theses to facilitate the expansion of the range of disciplines accessible to the forensic community. In addition, constructive feedback from the community will be pivotal in continuously developing this transnational resource, which is already seeing downloads globally.
Being a Society assessor is not always plain sailing or flying (!!) as in the case for Professor Charlie Bryce below. Our university accreditation scheme assures employers, parents and students of education standards and content for forensic and crime scene science degrees at undergraduate and post graduate level. This is an obvious benefit to our student members and prospective employers and reassuring for all CSFS members that the professional body is involved in setting quality standards.

A Routine Surveillance Visit.......Anything But!

The Society’s Accreditation scheme is now very well-established and well-considered and follows a set pattern of routine surveillance to ensure maintenance of standards and encouragement of enhancements. This involves a paper surveillance review in the first and second years following Accreditation, a formal Surveillance Visit in year three and a final paper surveillance in year four prior to a year five Reaccreditation visit by a full Panel. It is very reassuring to note, thus far, that the various surveillance reviews (paper and visit) have reconfirmed the Accreditation status of the institutions and, for the most part, these in-term reviews have been undertaken with little concern.

It was on such a routine visit to Hogeschool van Amsterdam (where there were no prior concerns about the quality of the forensic provision, indeed quite the opposite) that I encountered my most troublesome visit since the inception of scheme (and that even includes the engagement, planning and undertaking required for the first Accreditation in Australia). So, what made this such a difficult Surveillance visit?

On the morning of the visit I was met by the Programme Leader at my hotel in Amsterdam – it was a fairly short walk to the Metro Station (albeit that it was grey, cold and raining) prior to getting a train to the station close to the Hogeschool. Unfortunately, arriving at the station before our final stop we were informed that there was a major power failure – the train system was down, Schipol was temporarily closed, hospitals were without power etc. Leaving the station we felt it would be an easy matter to get a taxi to the Hogeschool...not so...it took at least twenty minutes in the rain to finally get transport.

The formal meetings were thus at least already behind schedule. The teaching staff were very relaxed and responsive about the delay and the rest of the meeting went remarkably well.

However, from my point of view I was constantly concerned about the arrangements for the return journey – the trains were not running to the airport and all flights were being rescheduled ad hoc. The trains to the airport did not start running until late afternoon and even then the schedule was chaotic! Eventually, arriving at Schipol my stress level increased even more. The flights were in general running late, my specific flight was showing a range of options. Enquiring at the check-in desk I was assured that the flight would leave on time (trust me!) – my own view on checking their own flight tracker system was already showing a sixty minute (and rising) delay! My scepticism proved correct and the flight duly departed Schipol very late in the evening with an arrival into Edinburgh around mid-night! As for a meal plan...this too went out the window! It proved to be a very taxing and tiring day (about 20 hours) but, once home and the stress relieved by a well-earned gin and tonic, it had proved (as with all others) to be a very worthwhile and productive visit. All aspects of the academic provision at Hogeschool were exemplary with a number of substantial commendations – all fully endorsed and supported by the students on the programme.

Thus, despite a difficult and stressful set of travel plans, it proved to be confirmation of the value of the Society’s formal Surveillance visit.
It’s just over three years ago that The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences launched its insurance scheme for members; a purpose built insurance policy designed in conjunction with CSFS, specifically for members of the forensic science profession.

Professional indemnity insurance covers you for compensation you have to pay to your clients because of problems with your work. It may also pay for mistakes to be corrected and reimburse you for fees that your client might refuse to pay.

The scope of activities insured by the policy is wide and includes forensic testing, examination, presentation, promotion, education and expert witness work undertaken by members.

Prices start from as little as £222.60 per year, for a limit of indemnity of £1m, any one claim.

Benefits include:

- Full retroactive cover – cover from the date you started as a forensic scientist
- Interest free instalments – pay monthly with no charge
- Limit of Indemnity applies to any one claim – rather than a shared aggregate limit offered by some policies
- Option to include Public Liability and property cover

Insurance cover for forensic practitioners can vary considerably. If members are concerned about alternate policies they might have, we are offering every member a free review of their cover which can help to identify any potential shortfalls or deficiencies.

We do hope that many more members will join the insurance scheme over the coming months which we believe offers excellent value to members, coupled with comprehensive policy protection.

Please email CSFS@insurance-partnership.com, contact Jelf Insurance Partnership on 01482 388597 or visit the CSFS website for more details.
ELSEVIER ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION ACCESS

Members of the The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences can receive an electronic subscription to:

- Forensic Science International
- Forensic Science International: Genetics
- Legal Medicine
- Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine
- Science & Justice

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Events for your diary in 2015 . . .

Fire Investigation conference:-
Where were we?  Where are we now?
Where do we want to go? How do we get there?

Date: 21-22 September 2015
Location: The Hilton Hotel, Leeds City Centre

The aim of this conference is to examine past and current fire investigation policies and procedures and identify the best way forward. At the end of the event, delegates will be able to:

- Understand how fire investigation best practices have evolved.
- Recognise the benefits of understanding each agencies’ roles and responsibilities and of adopting a multi-discipline approach at fatal and serious injury and/or crime related fire incidents.
- Contribute to the design and development of effective fire safety and arson reduction strategies.
- Be aware of current fire/crime related research projects taking place and the relevance to their own roles and responsibilities.
- Identify pathways leading to improved levels of knowledge and understanding, competency and accreditation

The January 1990 edition Journal of the Forensic Science Society included a copy of the Firth Memorial Lecture entitled “Working Together” which was delivered by Peter Imbert (Metropolitan Police Service Commissioner) at the 1989 Society meeting in Harrogate in November 1989. This international event, like others organised by the Society over the past three decades, focused on fire investigation.

Early bird registration is now available online and is available until 31st July. To book your place or to view the conference programme, visit the [website](#) now.

Autumn Conference and AGM :-
“By changing nothing, nothing changes" - innovation to develop forensic science practice in support of the justice system

Date: 5-6 November 2015
Location: The Renaissance City Centre Hotel, Manchester

The conference will examine the current state and future of ‘Research and Development’ within forensic science, and how it is needed to support the investigative process. Critical to the criminal justice system is the ability of forensic scientists to provide innovative guidance and assistance to investigators throughout an investigation. To achieve this scientific research and development is essential, it will not only help to ensure unbiased objectivity, but also provide best evidence to the courts and thereby raise public confidence in our legal system.
The call for abstracts is now closed and the conference convenors are currently putting together the draft programme. Each day will open with a plenary speaker, followed by the presentation of a case study, and then interactive workshops. The workshops will cover various forensic disciplines as well as examine and discuss the importance of research and development within those disciplines.

A detailed programme together with booking details will be available on the website in due course.

**Postgraduate Research Symposium**

**Date:** 5 November 2015  
**Location:** The Renaissance City Centre Hotel, Manchester

After another successful event in 2014, The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences is organising another general research focused event aimed specifically at MSc and PhD students. With the aim of promoting postgraduate student research in forensic science and providing a supportive forum for the exchange of knowledge and ideas, we are currently inviting students to submit their work for an oral presentation (20 minutes) or poster presentation.

To submit your work for consideration, visit the [website](http://charteredsocietyofforensicsciences.org) before **26th June 2015**.

**Annual Student Conference**

**Date:** 5 December 2015  
**Location:** University of Worcester

The topic for this year’s conference is “**Meet the experts**”. Attendees will hear from experts in the field of forensic science about their field of expertise and case examples of their work.

Further information on this conference will be made available in due course.

**Sponsorship**

There are a range of opportunities for companies to sponsor Society events and we can assist you in product and services promotion. For further details of our competitively priced opportunities, please contact our Event Management Organiser, Keshia McGuire on  
**Telephone** +44 (0) 1423 506068 or **Email:** conference@csofs.org

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Forensic Document Examination: Fundamentals and Current Trends


This book is divided into twelve chapters, featuring the following topics: the history of writing, the history and definition of forensic document examination, handwriting individuality, basic methodology, instrumentation, case examples, standards, court preparation and present and future research in the field of forensic document examination.

The layout of the book is extremely well thought out and makes it very easy to read, due to the chapter division by colors, the font size, type and spacing. Moreover, it contains excellent colored illustrations, often lacking in books about forensic document examination.

Chapters 1 and 2 provide a very well summarized explanation about the history of writing and forensic document examination that is hard to find in most books. Also, throughout the book, there is great care regarding the definition of forensic document examination, its scientific principles and the differentiation regarding other areas, such as graphology. The description about certification and standards for forensic document examiners, in Chapters 3 and 8, is also very interesting and the list of bibliographical references, found in each chapter, is extremely useful. Also, the case examples described in Chapter 7, containing very informative and high-quality illustrations, provide a great insight into the work carried out by forensic document examiners.

The main strength of this book resides, however, in Chapters 9 to 11, related to Forensic Document Examination in the Courts. Here the expert can find very useful information that helps to prepare for a court presentation and ideas to better present his/her findings, which can be applied outside the American Judicial System. Also, there is excellent information regarding Daubert challenges that is worthwhile to all experts.

Despite the positive aspects mentioned above, this book displays some weaknesses. For example, the Methodology described in Chapter 5 is quite superficial and writing instruments are only mentioned briefly, as case examples. Furthermore, there are no chapters regarding printing systems, paper or age determination of a document, which should be addressed in a book about forensic document examination. Also, document alterations would be better clarified and detailed if presented in a separate chapter, instead of being included in case examples.

Regarding handwriting examination, there is no mention of factors that cause changes in handwriting, nor the characteristics of different types of forgery and disguise, although some of these terms are mentioned in the text. The final discussion regarding the present and future of forensic document examination, although having interesting bibliographical references, also lacks depth and very little is said regarding digital signatures or future challenges in this field.

To sum up, this book is very useful as an introduction to the field of forensic document examination and to provide a clear idea of some of the work developed by forensic document examiners. Therefore, it is suitable particularly for undergraduate students, lawyers, document examiners at the beginning of their training or laymen, who would like to know more about forensic document examination in general. However, for the experienced document examiner, it adds very little new information about this field.

Carina Fernandes, MCSFS Forensic Document Examiner at NCForenses - Ciências Forenses Lda. in Porto, Portugal. E-mail: cafernandes@ncforenses.pt
The Human Skeleton in Forensic Medicine
Mehmet Yasar Iscan and Maryna Steyn

The author’s use of different styles to display the information is extremely helpful. Full page, half page and thumbnail black and white photographs, informative text blocks and relevant case studies are employed to ensure the reader can use different systems of learning. This makes the text very helpful for a large group of undergraduate scientists that have a research interest in forensic anthropology and forensic archaeology. Moreover, the text also investigates smaller sub-categories and useful tips for the most amateur of scientists or even law enforcement officers. For example, small sections such as what to do with a bag of bones and how to document an excavation.

More advanced areas are also explored in less detail in taphonomy chapter, such as commingled remains, including MLNI (Minimum Likely Number of Individuals) formula, and estimation of time since death. This section will be useful for individuals involved with mass disaster identification, whether practical and/or theoretical as formulas and application are explored. The inclusion of minimum equipment lists and usage are another advantage for the aspiring forensic anthropology or forensic archaeology undergraduate. As many texts around the subject explain techniques very well but more often than not omit useful practical information such as this.

This text is not only useful for graduates looking to get into the field or who may have a general research interest, for a paper for instance, but also medical students undertaking osteology research or forensic dental modules. This is mainly due to the texts chapters regarding skeletal age, forensic anthropology of the living and dental analysis. Currently in the UK there are no specific training courses for the accreditation of forensic dentists, therefore chapters such as these can be utilised by these professionals as well as undergraduate and postgraduate students. Radiographic methods and histomorphometry are also explored in rough detail again lending this texts use to undergraduate study. With extra room to read around any specific subjects that encapsulates the reader’s interest.

One of the main areas of forensic anthropologists practical duties includes the development of the biological profile from skeletal remains. This is covered in tremendous detail, during the main passage of the text, including different areas of study and methods employed for the different areas of; sex, age, ancestry and stature. Otherwise known as ‘The Big Four’. Thus this text can be used for practical and theoretical exploration of this area, mainly recommended for undergraduate level with some further reading postgraduate students would also find this section beneficial.

The text also explores DNA analysis within the forensic anthropology setting. Extraction and methods of analysis are explained in basic detail therefore could be used as a base of study in specific DNA analysis modules or provides a base for well-rounded knowledge for the forensic anthropologist.

In conclusion, the text is very informative and explores the main sub-categories involved in forensic anthropology and archaeology. As stated the text lends itself to undergraduate in particular forensic courses that heavily feature anthropology and human identification (DVI) modules or forensic anthropology courses themselves. Some postgraduate students may also find the text useful, with areas of study to be further read.
The Forensic Examination and Interpretation of Tool Marks—a review

*David Baldwin, John Birkett, Owen Facey and Gilleon Raby*

*Published by Wiley Blackwell*

The Forensic Examination and Interpretation of Tool Marks written by Baldwin, Birkett, Facey and Raby covers the following subjects within the forensic science sub-discipline of tool mark examination: Tool Manufacture; Scene Examination; Initial Laboratory Examination; Detailed Laboratory Examination; Interpretation and Evaluation; Manufacturing Marks and Physical Fits: Involving Tool Mark Related Examinations; and a chapter covering the examination of Plastic Film. The monograph covers all aspects of tool mark evidence from the crime scene to court.

There has been over the years a dearth of material published in book form on tool mark examination. Much of what has been published has appeared in the refereed forensic journals and also the journal published by the firearms and tool mark examiners, in jurisdictions where the subject of tool mark examination is included in the sub-discipline of firearms examination. A monograph covering the subject of tool mark examination is therefore well overdue.

The authors have stated that the purpose of the monograph is to bring together key techniques and developments in the field of tool marks in forensic science and explains clearly how tool mark analysis can be used within forensic investigation. In my view, the purpose of the monograph has been achieved. The examination of a wide variety of different tool mark evidence recovered from crime scenes is discussed and includes tool marks made in complex materials, such as bone.

The general principles and techniques used in tool mark examinations are also applied to a number of other related fields and as such, the monograph includes physical fit comparisons and the examination of manufacturing marks, including those marks made on plastic film.

The monograph brings together in one publication key techniques in the field of tool mark investigation and includes material on examining tool marks at the crime scene and in the laboratory, interpretation and evaluation issues and the most effective way of presenting tool mark evidence in a court of law.

Continued over....
This monograph on the examination, evaluation and presentation of tool mark evidence will be of interest to a wide range of people, not just tool mark examiners, and is an invaluable reference for the practicing forensic scientist, students of forensic science, members of the legal profession and crime scene investigators, providing them with the underpinning knowledge which will enable them to recognise the importance of tool mark examination in the context of an overall investigation and case presentation in court.

Baldwin, Birkett, Facey and Raby possess an excellent pedigree and have published a valuable text covering tool mark examination. The monograph is well presented and includes numerous illustrations and photographs and, as one who undertook tool mark examination many years ago, I would have found this to be an excellent text for reference during my time conducting field and laboratory examinations, examining tool mark evidence.

An excellent resource that would find a prominent place in an organisation’s library, a legal library and a forensic scientist’s personal library.

John Horswell FSSDip FCSFS
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