

Birkbeck School of Law
A photo essay working paper

By

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Visual culture and the judiciary: The Judges'
Service and Breakfast
1st October 2009

Comments on the photo essay are welcome
and should be sent to me via email to
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Introduction

This working paper is made up of a selection of my photographic images of the annual ‘Judges Service’ at Westminster Abbey, on the 1st of October 2009. The service is ‘a private event’ marking the start of the UK legal year (see <http://www.westminster-abbey.org/worship/special-services>). The images I was able to make are limited to the arrival of judges at Westminster Abbey and their departure to the Palace of Westminster. Media photographers were allowed into the Abbey and images from inside were included in news media reports. See for example <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article/article-1217459>

The Parliament website explains, ‘The ceremony...has roots in the religious practice of judges praying for guidance at the beginning of the year. The custom dates back to the Middle Ages...’ After the service the judges leave the Abbey via a rear entrance and walked to the Palace of Westminster where the Lord Chancellor entertains them with a ‘breakfast’ . (See <http://www.parliament.uk/about/occasions/lcbreakfast.cfm>)

This year the service coincided with the opening of the new UK Supreme Court (see <http://www.supremecourt.gov.uk/>). The Justices of the Supreme Court walked from the new court building on Parliament Square to Westminster Abbey to participate in the service.































