

Plastic fivers in circulation

A NEW, more durable £5 note is to enter circulation across Scotland today.

The Bank of Scotland notes are made entirely from polymer – a form of plastic – meaning they are less prone to tearing than paper ones. The first polymer banknotes entered circulation in Scotland in March 2015 when Clydesdale Bank issued two million notes to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the opening of the Forth Bridge.

The new notes will re-use the existing Bank of Scotland £5 design, with the front retaining the portrait of Sir Walter Scott.

Comedian hits out at Cleese



GLASGOW comedian Limmy has torn a strip off John Cleese after the Monty Python star launched a Twitter rant aimed at Scots.

The 76-year-old posted on Twitter about a newspaper column written by a Scottish journalist.

He wrote: "Why do we let half-educated tenement Scots run our English press? Because their craving for social status makes them obedient retainers?"

His tweets attracted heavy criticism, including that from Brian Limond, aka Limmy.

He fired back "I'm Scottish, come to Glasgow" adding that Cleese should "try saying that" to his face.

Teachers to take action

SECONDARY school teachers are to take industrial action over their "excessive workload", with nine out of 10 union members backing the move.

The Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association has confirmed it will start taking action from Monday, October 24.

It comes after 91 per cent of its members who voted in a ballot gave their support.

The move comes after teaching union EIS suspended the programme of industrial action it had been taking to reduce workload.

EVENING TIMES INVESTIGATION

DAY 0 - WEDNESDAY

COURT was due to start but as other cases were delayed the week before, my case has also been delayed. You hear on a day-to-day basis whether the trial is going to be the next day or not.

Today I was going to be meeting the Advocate Depute (AD) who would be prosecuting the case. At first I was nervous but I was met by the loveliest woman who took me to meet him.

My advocacy worker from rape crisis and a friend was there to support me as well.

When it came to the meeting, I had to go on my own without my advocacy worker or friend, to meet the AD.

I was surprised at how down to earth and human he was. I expected someone quite disconnected and maybe cold but he was the opposite and made me feel at ease straight away regarding court. I was told to expect court to start the following Monday.

I left feeling much better but a few hours later I got a phone call telling me the case was in actual fact to begin tomorrow afternoon and I was first up.

My stomach sank. I felt sick. It was actually happening. I called my advocacy worker and everyone who needed to know.

DAY 1 - THURSDAY FIRST DAY IN COURT

I'M feeling not too bad after praying the night before and after encouraging texts from friends and family.

My friend and my advocacy worker came with me but my friend couldn't stay as she is a witness and once I am taken to give evidence we cannot discuss the case.

I am introduced to an elderly lady from Victim Support – she would be sitting with me in court.

Although she was friendly I could've done with less chat. I would have rather my rape crisis advocacy worker was allowed in with me. We had built up a good relationship.

I was called in and affirmed I would tell the truth and the prosecution began. The AD's manner was calm – he asked about myself, my job, my kids (that was a lump in my throat). We went along a timeline running up to the night of the rape. It was difficult to discuss and I did get upset but it wasn't as bad as I had thought. I knew I had done well and I was so proud of myself.

DAY 2 - FRIDAY

TODAY was the day I would get questioned by the defence. I felt okay as I had a better idea of what to

SARAH was raped by a friend six years ago.

She initially contacted the police but after several months she found the experience too traumatising to continue with the prosecution.

Years later, Sarah, not her real name, received a visit from officers who were investigating another rape. They told her the man had raped again, and asked if she would testify.

In the second part of an investigation by **HANNAH RODGER** exploring rape victims' experience with the justice system, we tell Sarah's account.

Here she records her thoughts and feelings during the trial.

I chose to do right thing yet I was accused of being a liar

expect. I was called in and little did I know I was about to experience one of the most re-traumatising events of my life so far.

Court was set out the same as the day before. I couldn't see the accused as I had requested screens to be put up to help me give better evidence.

The defence spent the first 15 minutes harassing me about exactly how much I had to drink and if I was drunk.

He then went on for about an hour and 20 minutes about whether the accused had actually penetrated me or not.

He told me I was looking at him as if he was about to pounce on me. He made me feel tiny. Why was I having to prove my innocence? I was not the one on trial.

He spent the last 10 minutes telling me I was a liar and it was in fact me who attempted to have sex with him, and I was embarrassed that he rejected me so I decided to fabricate this lie and accuse him of raping me.

My rape happened almost six years ago and I had decided back then that I couldn't face a court case.

Within the next four years I received counselling and was learning to get on with my life. Then police showed up at my door to ask if they could use my statements for an inquiry they were looking into.

I could have said no, and continued with my life. But I chose to do what I thought right. I chose to put myself and my family through one of the most traumatic experiences.

Yet I was accused of being the liar.

I wonder how many more victims there are? I was doing what I could to protect other women from this predator. Once the defence was finished with me I broke down. My whole body was shaking and I felt sick.

During intervals and breaks because I had already given my evidence there was no more special measures for me.

I had to just walk around the court in fear of bumping into my rapist and his entourage he brought along with him every day.

I couldn't get in through the back door, nothing. It was just a case of "oh well get over it".

Thankfully it eventually became liberating for me. At first I couldn't even look at him. As the days went on

I regained some of that power he stole from me all those years ago.

I could walk past him and look at him and not fear any more. I could look at him and not want the world to swallow me whole or be reminded of what he did to me. I regained some strength and that in itself was worth more than the court case.

DAY 3 - MONDAY

I HAD no idea what to expect today – I was absolutely worn out. Sitting at the back and watching the case was so much more difficult than I had thought it would be. It had gotten to the point every time my name was mentioned I felt physically sick.

The first witness was a doctor I had seen shortly after I had been raped. I was

suffering suicidal thoughts and anxiety I hadn't got the best advice from him originally. I had left the surgery feeling disappointed with a handful of self-help leaflets which I don't think I once looked at. Nevertheless he stood and gave evidence and it was sufficient for the case.

Next it was the next victim to give evidence so it would be a closed court.

Over the next day it was the other victim's witnesses. I sat through all evidence for this other victim and I was absolutely horrified. Our stories were almost exactly identical, it was scary.

DAY 4 - WEDNESDAY

AFTER all the witnesses had given their evidence it was then up to the AD to tie up his case. Then the defence would do

the same and then it was time for the verdict. The AD done a very good job of tying everything up.

At the end of the day this is a prosecutor, he does not get paid by victims. He is not representing me, he represents the public.

Rape cases sadly seldom make it to court due to lack of evidence or the victim not wanting to go through the whole ordeal and I completely understand that.

It is probably one of the most difficult things I will ever have to endure. The defence took his turn at tying up his case and again he was so arrogant and theatrical it was horrible to watch.

How can someone sleep at night knowing they are defending people that commit these types of crimes?

He made out how good a person the accused is. I previously believed he was a good guy – we were close friends before he attacked me.

Some of the things the defence was saying about him were true but it doesn't change the fact he is a predator.

What does a rapist look like? What do they act like? If we were able to tell by someone's personality that they were going to be a rapist they wouldn't get away with it. They would be locked up before it happened.

The jury went on to deliberate. I have never felt so nervous in my life. It was almost time for the court to shut and I so hoped they would come to a decision before the end of the day.

Unfortunately they didn't and we were to come back again tomorrow.

DAY 5 - THURSDAY

VERDICT day. I was so ill I couldn't eat, in fact I had barely eaten the whole week. We waited around for a few hours all with our stomachs in our throats. My friend had been sick with nerves.

Eventually we got the call - the jury had decided. We all got back into the court room. He sat down the front where he had been all week.

Time seemed to just be going so slowly. I just needed to know so it could be finished.

My life for the past six years had been on and off torment from what he done to me; I needed closure. I was far from it but this verdict was a step in the right direction.

The jury came in and the court clerk asked what the verdict was on case 1, my case. Guilty. And case 2. Guilty. That was it. It was finished. He was found guilty.

He was handcuffed and the judge who had kept such a neutral position the whole way through the case really spoke some harsh words.

He was called an opportunistic predator and he was to expect a very lengthy sentence.

He was taken away as he left he gave myself and the other girl a look that will haunt me for the rest of my life.

It was his last look to intimidate us – that last bit of power he tried to gain.

1998 murder trial jury continue deliberations

JURORS in the trial of a man accused of murdering Surjit Singh Chhokar almost 18 years ago are to take a second day to consider their verdict.

Ronnie Coulter, 48, is accused of killing Mr Chhokar in Wishaw, North Lanarkshire, on November 4, 1998 and has been on trial at the High Court in Glasgow for the past four weeks. The court has heard Coulter was on trial for the second time after previously being acquitted of the murder in 1999.

He denies the charge and the jury retired to consider

their verdict yesterday morning after judge Lord Matthews finished giving them his legal directions.

The judge told the 14 jurors they could return verdicts of guilty, not guilty or not proven – the latter two being verdicts of acquittal. He said they were under no pressure and could take as long as they needed to reach their verdicts. With no decision reached by 4pm, he told the jury to return today for a second day of deliberations, adding it was "even more important" not to discuss the case with anyone.

Station package alert

A POLICE station was cordoned off after a suspicious package was delivered.

Glasgow City Centre Police Office in Stewart Street was cordoned off at around 9.15am yesterday.

Five fire engines were dispatched to the building in a safety procedure.

Police confirmed the contents of the item were not harmful after emergency services responded to the package during a safety alert. The suspicious item was removed by the fire service for analysis.

Reader travel **EveningTimes**

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