

special constables sent to Ireland in March 1920 who became notorious for their use of violence]. She was arrested and confined for some months in Mountjoy Prison without any charge being brought against her. A parcel of letters to her from her husband was seized during the raid. These letters, no doubt strongly criticizing the Government policy were handed to the authorities at the Post Office.<sup>19</sup>

An alternative version suggests that her relationship with Collins came to light when premises were hired mistakenly in her name and she was arrested and imprisoned.<sup>20</sup> Either way, the affair ended with the dismissal of Llewelyn Davies by the Post Office and his return to the firm.

It is most remarkable, given the climate of the time and the anti-Irish feelings that developed after the Easter Rising and, in 1916, during the trial and execution of Roger Casement (at which Llewelyn Davies kept vigil),<sup>21</sup> that a City firm of solicitors was prepared to take in and admit as a partner a man of such known sympathies. It seems hardly the place for a man who 'by temperament inclined to anarchism...[and] admitted rebels rather more, perhaps, than was wholly rational'.<sup>22</sup> To those who worked with him at the firm he appeared an eccentric, a pipe-smoking scribbler, although on the whole a likeable one. His intellectual brilliance, however, was unquestioned and can only have worked to the advantage of clients and the firm. He remained a partner until his sudden death, at the age of 67, in November 1935.

Among the staff at Mincing Lane was Cornwell.

*an unusual and extraordinary man. His language and his inventive ways, to say the least, colourful. He was brilliantly clever, but,*

*like a few other brilliant people, as soon as he arrived in an examination room he went to pieces so that he was never able to pass the Law Society's examinations and he remained an unqualified managing clerk for the rest of his days.*

Cornwell prepared the case and the evidence to support it for the Midland Bank in what was known as the 'Mr A case' (see Chapter 8). Also among the senior qualified staff was Edward Palmer, who had been offered a partnership in 1910 but had refused it because he did not want responsibility. His health was poor and he suffered from headaches, probably migraines. He did much of the work for the New River Company and was given the privilege of initialling his own bills of costs.

In 1924 George Chambers Blagden, who had served his articles with the firm and worked on the staff since his admission, became a partner. A sporting man who had played rugby and boxed in his younger days, his entry to the partnership followed the early retirement in 1923, at the age of 47, of Ernest Hawksley.

In the 1920s Cecil Coward's public work for the profession took up an increasing amount of his time. He had in the previous twenty years served on a number of committees and inquiries; in 1906 he was a member of Lord Macnaghten's Judicature Committee and in 1913 of the Royal Commission on delays in the King's Bench Division. In 1915 he had served as a member of the Royal Commission on the civil service. He had been a member of the Justitians, the legal dining club founded in 1876, since 1887 and was a member of the Reform Club. A member of the Council of the Law Society since 1910, he served as president of the Society in 1927-8, being honoured at the end of his term with the knighthood which was by then customary. His

address to the annual provincial meeting of the Society, held in Sheffield, whose university had awarded Coward an honorary degree in October 1927, reflected his length of time in practice, reviewing the progress of the profession over half a century.<sup>23</sup> He was by then 82 and in 1928 he retired from the firm. At the same time his son Robert, who was approaching 50, also retired. Sir Cecil enjoyed ten years of retirement before he died in 1938, at the age of 92. As a 'doyen' of City solicitors his reputation as 'a man of great industry with the highest standards of professional honour' had added lustre to the name of the firm.

Frederick Chance succeeded Sir Cecil Coward as senior partner. Within the firm he was known as a kindly and approachable man, less remote than his predecessor. He was 'a pillar of the church ... and ... a vice-president of the British and Foreign Bible Society for whom the firm acted'. It was apparently his custom to open the Bible each morning to turn up a text for the day. His professional ability left its mark on the firm no less than his command of the English language as it should be spoken and written was impressed on his staff.

In 1928 three members of the staff were admitted as partners, taking the partnership to number, for the first time, six at which it stayed until shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War. Carl Fabel was born in 1883 in Manchester, the second child and only son, born posthumously, of a German ships' agent. His maternal grandfather, John Broadhurst, had spent his life in West Africa. Fabel was educated at Rossall School, where he showed considerable prowess in sport, in particular cricket and hockey, which he continued to play until 1910. He was articled in 1902 at the firm of Laurence Jones & Co., spending two years in its Liverpool office and two years in the London office (at 59 & 60

George Blagden, articled with the firm, partner 1924-40, senior partner 1935-40.



Carl Fabel, joined the firm in 1910, partner 1928-53, senior partner 1940-53.

