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Lord Neuberger's Holdsworth Presidential Address

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Since it began in 1928 the **Holdsworth Club (/schools/law/life/holdsworth.aspx)** has invited a prominent judge or lawyer to be the Holdsworth President for that academic year. The President's main duty is to deliver the Presidential Address, a lecture on a topic of their choice. The list of past **Holdsworth Presidents (/schools/law/alumni/presidents.aspx)** reads like a Who's Who of the most prominent lawyers of the past 84 years. Lord Denning was the Holdsworth President on no less than three occasions.

On Friday 2nd March 2012 the Holdsworth Presidential Address was given by the Rt. Hon. Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury, Master of the Rolls, head of the civil justice system of England and Wales.

Lord Neuberger's Address was entitled ***Where Angels Fear to Tread*** **(http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/Resources/JCO/Documents/Speeches/mr-speech-holdsworth-lecture-2012.pdf)**. He discussed the impact of the increased prominence of senior judges in public life and how this may compromise the impartiality of the judiciary.

This controversial topic was noticed by the **Telegraph (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/lawreports/9149326/Lord-Neuberger-criticises-fellow-judge-for-appearing-on-MasterChef.html)** and the **Guardian (http://www.guardian.co.uk/law/2012/mar/16/judge-courting-publicity)**, which both ran stories highlighting the lecture, which was so well-attended by Birmingham Law students that a larger venue had to be found at the last minute.

Lord Neuberger summarised the lecture as follows:

> "In my view, the development of judicial comment on a wide range of legal and constitutional issues, through speeches, lectures and articles, carries with it more benefits than drawbacks, but it calls for much care, circumspection, rationing, and even self-denial, when it comes to considering whether to speak, what to say and how to say it. It also calls for an understanding by all concerned of the proper boundaries within which comment can properly be made."

After the lecture, Lord Neuberger dined with the academic community and the student committee of the Holdsworth Club. He spent the afternoon judging Birmingham's prestigious **Camm Cup Mooting final (/schools/law/news/2012/camm-cup.aspx)**, which was won by Arrin Nouri, a second year student on the LLB programme.

Pictured: Lord Neuberger and the Committee of the Holdsworth Club 2011-12. Picture by Nivedita S.

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