

Catherine Tweedy BSc (Hons), CBIol, MRSB
Personal Qualifications and Experience

Mrs Tweedy has been a Forensic Scientist since 1995 and specialises in:

- 1) Fingerprint identification evidence and related issues in both criminal and civil matters. Mrs Tweedy has been involved in over 1300 cases involving fingerprint evidence. Her expertise accrues from fingerprint training in UK and USA, experimental research and over 22 years' case experience. Typical cases involve:
 - Comparison of questioned contact marks recovered from scenes of exhibits relating to criminal investigations.
 - Examination of the exhibits or surfaces from which it is alleged the 'identified' contact marks originate.
 - Consideration of possibility of 'plant', transplant, longevity, robustness, etc.
 - Consideration of how contact occurred and its relevance with respect to the allegations.

She is a contributing author to a book entitled "Identification, Investigation, Trial and Scientific Evidence" (Paul Brogan, Legal Action Group, 2004). She has published an article regarding longevity of fingerprints in the International Association of Identification Florida Division's journal. She has presented talks in several countries on fingerprint related issues and, in 2007, brought to light the most significant challenge to fingerprint identifications in the English courts. Mrs Tweedy prepares reports for criminal cases throughout the UK and Ireland, giving evidence in Youth, Magistrates' and Crown Courts on the reliability of fingerprint identification and overall evidential value of their location, orientation and potential age.

- 2) Handwriting and signature examinations. Mrs Tweedy has been involved in over 200 cases involving the examination and comparison of either handwriting samples or signatures. Typical cases involve:
 - The comparison of questioned handwriting (on documents such as 'dealer's lists', letters, application forms, lease documents, invoices and receipts) with specimen handwriting to determine authorship.
 - The examination of disputed signatures (on documents such as Wills, Vehicle-related forms, mortgage and loan applications) to determine authorship.
 - Comparison of handwritten entries made in two names with each other to establish common authorship.

Mrs Tweedy has a BSc (Hons) in Biological Science. She is a member of the International Association of Identification, Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences and Royal Society of Biology (MRSB). She holds the following professional membership: CBIol (Chartered Biologist)

Mrs Tweedy has examined fingerprint evidence and provided reports in the following notable cases involving fingerprint evidence:

R v Barber Mrs Tweedy was able to demonstrate experimentally that fingerprints could persist for far longer than had been alleged (in excess of months versus the alleged several hours). This refuted the Prosecution allegation that the Defendant's marks specifically related to a burglary rather than earlier occasions when he had been invited into the house in question.

R v Wilson In this high profile case it was alleged that the Defendant's fingerprint had been formed in the Deceased's blood on a stair bannister. Mrs Tweedy demonstrated that the Deceased's DNA profile, obtained different places on same bannister, did not relate to the Defendant's fingerprint. Instead it related to two spots of blood lying a significant distance from, and unrelated to, the Defendant's fingerprint.

R v Smith Another nationally high profile case in which Mrs Tweedy was the first of several experts to challenge the Police Fingerprint Officers' "identification".

R v Gill Mrs Tweedy was able to demonstrate that fingerprints attributed to the Defendant did not lie on a Passport Application form allegedly fraudulently completed by him. The fingerprints, which lay on the Defendant's Birth Certificate he had reported stolen, had been incorrectly labelled by the laboratory.

R v Brown Mrs Tweedy was able to show that fingerprints on a knife used in an assault were not those of the Defendant. No Prosecution fingerprint evidence had been served in this case.

R v Noguera It was alleged that the Defendant's fingerprint had been recovered from a mirrored jewellery box handled by an intruder. Mrs Tweedy was provided with seven mirrored jewellery boxes from the Complainant and she was able to demonstrate that the Defendant's fingerprints could not have originated from any of those jewellery boxes.

R v Qazimaj (aka Vital Dapi) It was alleged that the Defendant murdered an elderly man, drove his wife to a cash machine to take money from their account before murdering her, stealing their vehicle and fleeing the country by ferry and changed his identity. Mrs Tweedy provided a comprehensive overview of the fingerprint evidence and explored how the person arrested in Luxembourg and purporting to be Vital Dapi, was identified as British National Ali Qazimaj.

Lord Justice Leveson commented at the Forensic Science Society 2010 Conference in London that, historically, Courts had incorrectly assumed that the centuries old fingerprint identification process was "virtually unassailable". He further remarked that the process is "fundamentally subjective" and "therefore capable of mis-identification". Courts had erroneously been led to believe that statistics showed the (now obsolete) 16 point standard to be infallible. Until relatively recently, "identifications" were rarely scrutinised scientifically by independent parties. Scrutiny from experts worldwide highlighted that the cause of `identification` errors was multifactorial. Several high profile mis-identifications have now been recognised and publicised.

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