Judicial House of Lords to Supreme Court: Then and Now

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This was the second of two lectures, the first given by Lord Reed in October 2026, in which the Supreme Court marked the 150 years since the passing of the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876. It was delivered to an invited audience in Courtroom 1 of the Supreme Court.

I have divided what I want to say into three main parts. The first looks at the background to the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876. The second examines the Judicial House of Lords between 1876 and 2009. The third, and longest part, looks at the similarities and differences between today's Supreme Court and the Judicial House of Lords.

1. The background to the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876

First then, the background to the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876. That Act for the first time conferred the power on the monarch to appoint Law Lords (or to give them their full title "Lords of Appeal in Ordinary") to the House of Lords to conduct appeals.

Before the Act, and earlier on in the 19th century, while appeals were heard by the House of Lords, the composition of the Lords hearing appeals was not fixed (albeit that the Lord Chancellor presided). Astonishingly, Lords without any legal training could play a role. The appeals were heard in the House of Lords chamber and any Lord who was interested could sit and listen to the appeal and could vote on whether to allow or dismiss the appeal.

So, for example, in the guardianship case of *Seymour v Lord Euston* in 1806, the Prince of Wales gathered together eighty supportive peers in the House of Lords to secure a verdict in favour of Mrs Fitzherbert, his longtime lover, to allow her to keep the custody of an orphaned girl, to whom she had become very attached.[1]

Discontent about the participation of lay peers gradually intensified during the 19th century, with a particular turning point being a severe rebuke by Lord Wharncliffe to the lay peers in *O'Connell v R* in 1844. The appeal concerned whether to quash a conviction (the main defendant being Daniel O'Connell the renowned Irish Catholic leader) and, despite the legally trained Lords being in favour of quashing, several lay Lords voted against it. Lord Wharncliffe made clear to the lay peers that this was unacceptable:

"My Lords, … I cannot help suggesting that your Lordships should not divide the House upon a question of this kind, when the opinions of the law Lords [by which he meant

* I would like to thank Baroness Hale of Richmond for her helpful comments on an earlier draft. I would also like to thank my Judicial Assistants Dana McGibbon and Daniel Whitham for their help.

[1] Thomas Beven, 'The Appellate Jurisdiction of the House of Lords, II' (1901) 17 LQR 357, 368.

Lords who were lawyers because there were no Law Lords as such at this time] have been already given upon it, and the majority is in favour of reversing the judgment. In point of fact, my Lords, they constitute the Court of Appeal; and if … noble Lords unlearned in the law should interfere to decide such questions by their votes, instead of leaving them to the decision of the law Lords, I very much fear that the authority of this House as a Court of Justice would be very greatly lessened throughout the country."[2]

Louis Blom-Cooper and Gavin Drewry in their book, *Final Appeal,* report that this rebuke marked what was "virtually" the end of lay participation in the House's judicial business.[3] Nevertheless, even after 1844, there were *some* further instances of lay participation in the judicial business of the House of Lords. Indeed, it appears that the third judge in one of the great cases familiar to all law students, *Rylands v Fletcher*[4] in 1868, may have been a lay peer. Professor Robert Heuston in an LQR article in 1970 entitled "Who was the Third Lord in *Rylands v Fletcher*?" writes: "it may be that only two Law Lords sat … but that [the required] quorum [of three] was in fact maintained throughout by the presence of some bishop or lay peer. …This is the solution favoured by the experts at Westminster today." [5]

Although by 1876 the appeals had almost entirely come to be conducted by those who were lawyers, the importance of the 1876 Act was to enable for the first time suitable senior lawyers to be appointed specifically as Law Lords ie as professional and salaried appeal judges. It is therefore from 1876 that we tend to think of the House of Lords as a court of appeal in something like the modern sense.

2. The Judicial House of Lords 1876 - 2009

Nevertheless, it was still a very peculiar appellate court by today's standards. This was not least because, until 1948, the appeal hearings, albeit now confined to being heard by the Law Lords without any possible lay participation, were still being conducted in the open chamber ie the same large and open chamber that is used for Parliamentary business. But in that year extensive repairs were being made to the Palace of Westminster following the bomb damage inflicted during the Second World War. The House of Lords gave up its chamber for use by the House of Commons. Without an obvious home, the Law Lords constituted themselves as an Appellate Committee of the House of Lords so that they could sit in a committee room, almost invariably Committee Room 1 (although occasionally Committee Room 2 was also used), rather than in the open chamber. Hence the full name of the court became the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords.

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2 (1844) 11 Cl and F 155, 421-426.

3 Louis Blom-Cooper and Gavin Drewry, *Final Appeal* (1972) p 24.

4 (1868) LR 3 HL 330.

5 (1970) 86 LQR 160, 163.

But what the Appellate Committee was still doing was making a report to the House of Lords to be voted on and this had at least two noteworthy consequences. First, the handing down of the judgment, ie the report to the House, was still conducted in the chamber. Secondly, each Law Lord gave a speech, reporting to the House of Lords, explaining his or her decision. Initially each speech was read out which could take a long time.[6] But the custom became not to read out the speech but rather to say, "For the reasons given in a speech which I have prepared, copies of which are available in print, I would allow/dismiss the appeal." But the significant point is that what each Law Lord said was correctly described as a speech rather than a judgment and, on the face of it, there was a procedural difficulty in having a single judgment of the court as opposed to separate speeches. That was so even if four of the Law Lords simply said, "I agree with the speech of Lord X". However, in criminal cases, a way round that procedural difficulty was eventually developed, provided there was unanimity, when Lord Bingham became the senior Law Lord by referring to the 'composite opinion of the committee'.

Although at this stage there were no television cameras allowed in courts, it was because the House of Lords was part of Parliament and, from 1990, the proceedings of Parliament could be televised that television cameras could film live the handing down of judgments in the open chamber (although not of the actual hearing in the committee room). So if you want to see exactly what it was like, you can go online and watch a video of the live televising of the handing down of the famous *Pinochet* decision on November 25 1998.[7] There is also a well-known painting, the original of which hangs in Committee Room 1, and there is a copy in the Supreme Court dining room, of the final hand-down in the House of Lords on 30 July 2009 in *R (on the application of Purdy) v DPP* [8] a case about assisted dying (which was the last of the seven decisions handed down on that day).

It should also be remembered that the Law Lords for most of the 20th century were still entitled to, and did, take an active role in the legislative business of the House of Lords. But a self-denying convention developed, and was formalised in the early 21st century when Lord Bingham became senior law lord, whereby the Law Lords would not take part in debates where there was any likelihood of a case subsequently coming before them on the matters being debated.

In the second half of the 20th century, the Law Lords initially had offices on what was called the Law Lords' corridor which led from the Lords' lobby to the peers' dining room.

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[6] Blom-Cooper in Blom-Cooper, Dickson and Drewry (eds), *The Judicial House of Lords 1876-2009* in his chapter on "The Style of Judgments" refers to one case on 18 January 1962 where the reading out took three and a half hours.

[7] *R v Bow Street Metropolitan Stipendiary Magistrate ex p Pinochet Ugarte (No 1)* [2000] 1 AC 61.

[8] [2009] UKHL 45, [2010] 1 AC 345.

Subsequently the offices were on the second floor of the West wing. There was also a small conference room and law library. [I remember going to see Lord Goff in 1994].

The administration comprised the Judicial Office which was staffed by two clerks, ie the head of the office and a deputy, who were parliamentary officials. There was one secretary. The funding came as part of the funding of the House of Lords and was therefore not subject to the budgetary restraints placed on government departments. In that sense the judicial House of Lords had comparative financial independence. As James Vallance White, who was the Head of the Judicial Office, has explained, "Unlike a government department, the House of Lords [was] not subject to budgetary constraints. So long as the Clerk of the Parliaments (as Accounting Officer) was persuaded that something was needed and that it was desired by the Law Lords, money was forthcoming." [9]

The number of Law Lords appointed started off in 1876 with two and then at various stages of the 20th century the maximum number was raised to 4, to 6, to 7, to 9 to 11 and most recently in 1994 to 12.[10] The Lord Chancellor could also choose to sit on the appellate committee and was, in principle, the Head of the Law Lords. But over the course of time, the Senior Law Lord (who was appointed by the Lord Chancellor but was usually the longest serving Law Lord) came to be seen as, in practice, in charge of the court with administrative leadership duties. Lord Bingham was the first person who was not already a Law Lord to be appointed as Senior Law Lord with leadership duties when in 2000 he was parachuted in from being Lord Chief Justice.

As regards the composition of panels, this was a matter for the Lord Chancellor although, in practice, the Clerk in charge of the Judicial Office and the Lord Chancellor's Permanent Secretary drew up the panels for the approval of the Lord Chancellor and from early in the 1980s this was delegated by the Lord Chancellor to the Senior Law Lord. The Lord Chancellor would be asked on which cases he wished to sit. After June 2000, the Lord Chancellor left it to Lord Bingham to suggest cases where, in his opinion, there was little danger of a challenge on Human Rights Act 1998 grounds to the Lord Chancellor sitting.

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[9] "The Judicial Office" in Louis Blom-Cooper, Brice Dickson and Gavin Drewry (eds), *The Judicial House of Lords 1876-2009*, 30, at 42.

[10] The 1876 Act provided for two Law Lords only, who would preside over cases alongside the Lord Chancellor and any other senior judges (or former senior judges) who happened to be members of the House of Lords. Provision was made for the appointment of two further Law Lords in the future, and the maximum number of Law Lords was then successively increased through a series of further pieces of legislation: the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1913 raised the limit from four Law Lords to six, the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1929 to seven, Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1947 to nine, and the Administration of Justice Act 1968 to eleven. A statutory instrument made under the Administration of Justice Act 1968 (the Maximum Number of Judges Order 1994 (SI 1994/3217) allowed for up to twelve Lords of Appeal in Ordinary.

The appeal hearings were normally heard by a panel of five. The barristers appearing were wigged and robed but the Law Lords were not. The committee room did not have an upraised area for the panel so that all in the room were on the same level. There were some rows of removeable seats for the public at the back of the room.

Timetables for hearings were introduced in the 1990s and this innovation led to shorter hearings.[11] Certainly, gone for ever were hearings such as in the *Tin Mines* case in 1989 which lasted for 26 days.[12]

Once the hearing had finished, the Law Lords deliberated in private usually by staying in the same committee room and with the doorkeepers shouting, 'Clear the Bar'. The tradition (which appears to have stemmed from standing orders of the Privy Council dating back to the 17th century) of the Law Lords, in their private deliberations, expressing their views in reverse order of seniority was applied.

How did appeals get to the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords? The answer is that there was a permission to appeal hurdle. In general terms, unless permission was given by the Court of Appeal, permission to appeal was decided by Appeals Committees comprising three Law Lords. Although the practice early on was to have oral permission to appeal hearings, these had largely died out by 2009, and the permissions to appeal were almost always dealt with on the papers alone. The criteria, set out in standing orders, were whether there was an arguable point of law of general public importance.

Judicial assistants were first appointed for the legal year 2000-2001. There were four of them, accommodated in a cramped converted room at the top of the tower above the peers' entrance, formerly Black Rod's flat. The JAs were shared between the 12 justices (although formally allocated to each of the four senior Law Lords).

I am now about to move on to the third Part of my lecture which looks at the similarities and differences between the Judicial House of Lords and today's Supreme Court. But before I do, and at popular request after Lord Reed's lecture, I do want to show the handing down of the Pinochet decision in 1998. There are five Law Lords involved in the open Chamber. They are in order the presiding judge, Lord Slynn who has to keep moving from his role of bringing the report to the House and his own speech, and then there is Lord Lloyd, Lord Nicholls, Lord Steyn and Lord Hoffmann. They are split 3-2 with the first two Law Lords dissenting. The majority's decision was to allow the appeal so that the decision was that Senator Pinochet, the former Head of State of Chile, had no immunity from extradition in respect of the crimes charged against him. You will see

[11] Alan Paterson, *Final Judgment* p 39.
[12] *JH Rayner Ltd v Department of Trade and Industry & Others* [1990] 2 AC 418

that the handdown is wrapped up in the Parliamentary procedures for the bringing of a report to the House from a committee.

[VIDEO PLAYED AT THIS POINT]

3. Contrast and comparison with the UK Supreme Court

I am not going to elaborate on the background to the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 except to say that it came, somewhat out of the blue, with no real prior consultation. What that Act did, along with some other measures, was to abolish the appellate jurisdiction of the House of Lords and to create in its place the UK Supreme Court as from October 2009? What then are the similarities and differences between the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords and the UK Supreme Court?

(1) The similarities

Looking first at the similarities, the content of the appeal work and the approach to it have been essentially unchanged. Although the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court was marginally widened to include UK devolution disputes, that had previously been for the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, one would be hard-pressed to differentiate between the substance of an appeal heard by the Law Lords pre-October 2009 and one heard by the Supreme Court after October 2009. The trappings and surroundings changed but the substance of the work did not.

In particular, the great substantive distinction between the US Supreme Court and the Judicial House of Lords – that our highest court could not strike down primary legislation as unconstitutional and the most that could be done was to make a declaration of incompatibility under section 4 of the Human Rights Act 1998 – was left unchanged.

Nevertheless opinions had been expressed that, on leaving the House of Lords, the Supreme Court would take a more activist role in interpreting statutes, in quashing executive action through judicial review and in developing the common law. That, in other words, the Supreme Court would wish to mark out its new creation by making some break with its previous decision-making. But that did not happen. The content of the work – a mix of public and private law appeals – has continued in precisely the same way as before. The appeals are conducted as before, albeit that no-one in court is wigged and robed including the barristers,[13] and decisions are reached in the same way

[13] Initially in the Supreme Court, some barristers, especially in criminal cases, insisted on being wigged and robed and, if so, all the barristers had to do so. The present Practice Direction of the Supreme Court dealing with this is PD 6.15 and reads "It is now standard practice for Counsel not to robe for hearings.

with the private deliberations, now conducted in one of the private rooms and hardly ever in the courtroom itself, carried on in the same way as before not least with the junior justice going first in giving his or her views.

Similarly, permissions to appeal are decided in the same way by panels of three Justices. The essential criteria for permission to appeal – that there is an arguable point of law of general public importance – remains the same and, as before 2009, the decisions are almost invariably made on paper without an oral hearing.

The Justices continue to be helped by judicial assistants. The four for whom there was room in the House of Lords went up to eight on the move to the Supreme Court and for the last few years each of the 12 Justices has been allocated his or her own judicial assistant.

(2) The differences

Where therefore are the main differences?

I put to one side the obvious differences that the court is now sitting in a different building; that there is now, at the head of the court, a President (with a Deputy) rather than the Senior Law Lord being in charge; and that the financial and administrative organisation of the court has also obviously changed. Although not a government department, the Supreme Court is given funding by the Treasury which it then controls for itself through a Chief Executive.

The biggest and most significant change has been the transparency of, and enhanced communication about, the court's work. What the Supreme Court is doing is significantly more open and accessible than it used to be. Part of that has been brought about simply by the name change and by locating the court outside Parliament. Members of the public, understandably, were confused by the old system and many would not have realised that the Judicial House of Lords was the final appeal court and was separate from the legislative House of Lords. Now with the name "Supreme Court" and with this separate building, it is immediately clear that the Supreme Court is a court and separate from the Legislature. To put simply, the separation of powers in our constitution between the judiciary, the legislature and the government has been made clear by the moving out from Parliament of the final appeal court. Indeed, the very siting of this Supreme Court building has been fortunate because in a short area one can see the separate buildings of constitutional power, Parliament, Government in the buildings in Whitehall, and the Supreme Court here on the other side of Parliament Square.

That basic transparency has been enhanced by several specific initiatives. I here mention seven of them.

There is no need to contact Registry for approval of the decision not to robe. If parties all agree that they wish to robe for a hearing, they must communicate this to Registry via the Portal."

First, since its inception in 2009 the court has livestreamed all hearings via its website; and a very recent innovation has been the routine uploading of the parties' written cases to the website so as to enable the hearing to be even more easily followed.[14] Videos of previous hearings are available on the website and on the Supreme Court's YouTube channel. The court also livestreams the hand-downs of its judgments which are normally given in court. The Justice (or one of the Justices) who has written the lead judgment will give a short explanation at the hand-down of the Court's decision in as brief, simple and clear a way as possible. Linked to this is that the Court engages with the public on social media. Additionally, there are lots of resources on the website to enhance understanding of the court.

No doubt, had it remained where it was, some at least of these advances in digital communication would have been used by the Judicial House of Lords. But it has been easier to make use of new technology to make the court's work more transparent because the Supreme Court is a separate and autonomous institution.

Linked to digital communication is that the hearing bundles have, since Covid, been almost entirely digital rather than paper. And behind the scenes, the filing with the Registry of applications to appeal is now digital through the court's recently created portal.

Secondly, the design of the building itself has been a way in which the work of the Supreme Court has been made more transparent and accessible. Finding a way to Committee Room 1 where the House of Lords hearings took place was very difficult for a member of the public. It was labyrinthine at best. In contrast, the Supreme Court building welcomes the public throughout the year and has a relatively simple lay-out and modern furnishings, such as the carpet representing the four nations of the UK which runs throughout the building (and was designed by Sir Peter Blake who, as you may know, was the co-designer of the famous Beatles Sergeant Pepper album cover). There is a public exhibition space, which provides visitors with information about the history of the Court and the English legal system. When a hearing is taking place, members of the public can sit in the relatively large area of public seating inside the Court. Public tours of the building are available and there is a team of 'Information Officers' who show visitors (including school trips) around. The website also provides the potential for individuals to take an interactive virtual tour of the building. Since it was created, there have been well over a million in-person visitors to the Supreme Court.[15] There is, therefore, a stark contrast between today's Supreme Court building

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[14] In the year 2025-2026, the UKSC and JCPC websites together had 657,000 users: the Supreme Court and Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, Annual Report and Accounts 2025-2026 (The Supreme Court and Judicial Committee of the Privy Council – Annual Report and Accounts) p 6.

[15] As of 14 November 2026, the total number was 1,164,016. In the financial year 2025-2026, there were 84,902 visitors to the court and 593 tours of the Court were taken (both in-person and virtually).

which is open and accessible to the public and, in contrast, the difficult to find, with limited public seating, old Committee Room 1 in the House of Lords.

Thirdly, there are many schools which are too far away to visit the Court or who cannot afford to fund a visit to London. A scheme called 'Ask A Justice' was therefore launched in 2019. This gives senior pupils at schools across the United Kingdom the opportunity to participate from their classrooms in a live question-and-answer session with a Justice. The pupils submit a list of questions in advance and a Justice then spends some 45 minutes, before court, discussing the answers with them. Their questions are often very interesting and indeed demanding. For example, I have been asked: 'Should social and moral considerations influence Supreme Court decisions?', 'how do you avoid bias?', 'what aspect of judging do you think is most often misunderstood by students?'; 'what is the most difficult case you have sat on and why?'; 'does good advocacy make any difference to the result?' Again the 'Ask a Justice' scheme is an attempt to open up the work of the court and to allow older schoolchildren to see that the Justices are not aliens from a different planet.

Although such an initiative could, with modern technology, have been undertaken by the old House of Lords, the limited facilities in Parliament and the opaque nature at the time of the Law Lords' judicial role make it unlikely that that would have happened.

Fourthly, and more generally, the Justices engage with the legal community including universities through speaking engagements. The Justices' lectures which, for some odd reason, are called speeches, range across diverse areas, including substantive legal topics as well as information about the court's work. The text of the speech is generally published on the Supreme Court website. Having been an academic – and an academic's greatest fear is of their work being ignored - I am pleasantly surprised just how many people, especially students and academic lawyers, read those speeches.

True it is that the Law Lords often gave lectures so this is not such a contrast with what went before. But obviously online publication of the lectures is a new phenomenon.

Fifthly, the Court attempts to assist journalists in reporting its work. Of course, all Supreme Court judgments go on the website and in due course appear in the law reports, both online and in hard copy. However, it is important that the judgments are reported and reported accurately by the mainstream and/or specialist legal media depending on the subject matter. The Court's communications team keeps the media abreast of the work of the Supreme Court and offers embargoed judgment hand-downs, where possible, and supports journalists to attend court hearings and the hand-down of judgments. Very importantly, press summaries, released with each Supreme Court judgment, provide concise summaries of judgments which may be more accessible for journalists and members of the public. They succinctly identify the background, issue, result and reasoning of a case. They also contain pinpoint paragraph references to the

judgment and can therefore be read either independently or as an aid to digesting the judgment itself.

Again, this is an initiative which the old House of Lords could have undertaken but, as I understand it, there were, prior to the Supreme Court, no press summaries in the House of Lords and journalists had to do their best with the full written judgments. As we have seen, the hand-downs were in open court (ie in the open chamber) but did not comprise summaries of the speeches.

Sixthly, linked to the drive for accessibility – but I think important enough to stress as a separate change in its own right – is the style of judgments. In recent times, the clarity of the Supreme Court's judgments has, I think, been enhanced by the increased use of headings and sub-headings so that the reader can more easily navigate the judgment and understand the flow of the reasoning. Another aspect of this drive for clarity has been the favouring of single judgments wherever possible. In the past, as I have mentioned, there was a procedural difficulty in having a single judgment so that, the normal practice was for each Law Lord to give a speech, even if concurring. Certainly, it was commonplace for each of the Law Lords who had sat on an appeal to write a substantial and reasoned concurring speech.[16] In contrast, the general practice now is for there to be a single lead judgment whether written by one or, commonly, by more than one, Justice. The result is (hopefully) that the ratio of the case is easier to decipher. Although dissenting judgments are permitted and are not discouraged, the statistics show that the present Supreme Court is remarkably united in its decisions. In 2025 92% were unanimous.[17]

Seventhly, as an autonomous institution, free from Parliamentary constraints, the Supreme Court, unlike the Judicial House of Lords, has been free to sit outside London, and it has on five occasions done so by sitting in Edinburgh, Belfast, Cardiff, Manchester and Glasgow. Again this opens up its work to a wider range of people and makes clear that the Supreme Court is an institution serving all parts of the United Kingdom.

There are two other changes from the old House of Lords, not concerned with transparency and accessibility, that I would want to highlight. The first is that the trend towards shorter hearings, that had started in the House of Lords, has continued. It is rare in the Supreme Court for a hearing to go beyond two days and most are heard in a day or a day and a half. I have never sat in a case lasting more than 4 days.

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[16] In the House of Lords, the speeches were given in the order of seniority of the Law Lord. In contrast, the present practice is for the leading speech to come first.

[17] This is similar to the percentage in the 1980s when Lord Diplock, who discouraged dissents and, indeed, concurrences, was senior Law Lord. But it is very different from when, eg Lord Bingham, who was more relaxed about dissents and multiple judgments, was senior Law Lord. See generally Alan Paterson, *Final Judgment* esp pp 113 – 120.

Secondly, although there was always a degree of engagement with judges from overseas, this has increased significantly since 2009 perhaps because welcoming international visitors is easier given the room space that the Supreme court now has. In the 2025-2026 financial year, the Justices took part in 19 inward international visits, 16 outward international visits, and 4 bilateral exchanges.[18]

However, alongside all these beneficial changes, stemming from the separate and autonomous nature of the Supreme Court, one major disadvantage has emerged. That, one might say ironically, is the lack of proximity between the Justices and Parliamentarians. When they were rubbing shoulders in Parliament it may have been easier for Parliamentarians to understand, and to be less distrustful of, the work of the highest court. Whether that is correct or not, it is now perceived to be important to fill the gap by attempts to increase an understanding of the Supreme Court's work among Parliamentarians. The President and Deputy President of the Supreme Court appear annually before the House of Lords Constitution Committee; and there is an annual roundtable meeting between all the Justices and the Justice Committee of the House of Commons. Since the July 2024 general election, the Supreme Court has engaged directly with all new Members of Parliament, providing each of them with materials explaining the rule of law and the constitutional role of the courts. Justices have also taken part in question-and-answer sessions with MPs in private meetings. There is often even less understanding of the court's work and role than we would have expected. For example, one MP asked whether the Supreme Court gives reasons for its decisions and, if so, whether they are made public.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, what I have hoped to clarify is that, while the Supreme Court was new in October 2009, it has a rich history. To understand this court, one cannot simply start the story in 2009 and that explains why it is appropriate for us, as the Supreme Court, to be celebrating 150 years of the Law Lords. I have pointed to the similarities and focused on several differences, essentially aspects of transparency and accessibility based on the separation of powers, between the former Appellate Committee of the House of Lords and today's Supreme Court. I have also stressed the one major disadvantage. It will perhaps have been apparent that, in my view, the benefits significantly outweigh the one major disadvantage.

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[18] The Supreme Court and Judicial Committee of the Privy Council Annual Report and Accounts 2025-2026 (The Supreme Court and Judicial Committee of the Privy Council – Annual Report and Accounts), p.36.