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The Water Cooler: summer edition

* **Clifford Chance** and former competition partner **Michael Bryceland** - once considered one of the City's hottest up-and-coming lawyers, who departed left earlier this year to "take time out from the law" - have confirmed that he left after bringing a claim against the firm. Reports in *The Lawyer* claimed it was for discrimination over his sexual orientation, though neither party would comment on the details. But a spokesperson for CC told *The Water Cooler*: "The parties are pleased to confirm that the matter was amicably resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both parties without the need for any hearings and Clifford Chance wishes Michael well in his future career." The likely price of mutual satisfaction, according to employment lawyers? Seven figures.

* Cambridge has been named the UK's **best law school** in the latest *Times Good University Guide*, followed by University College London and Aberdeen. Check out how your school measures up [here](#).

* A distinctly peculiar legal row has broken out in cyberspace, on the **Second Life** site. We'll try and explain this as politely as we can, but, broadly, a company called Eros LLC markets a product that allows you to add to your avatar (or online personality) certain, er, appendages that are missing from the standard model. And it can animate avatars in sexual positions, too. Someone on - in? within? (the terminology is confusing) - Second Life is selling pirate copies. The lawyers acting for Eros are now trying to find out who the real-life person is. The man, or whoever, was confronted via his avatar and apparently laughed off the allegations, saying, "What are you going to do? Sue me?" Which is just what they plan, when they work out who he is.

* A judge in Ohio has banned jurors in her court from watching shows such as **CSI** and **Law & Order** because it may create "unrealistic expectations" about "what can and can't be done with evidence".

* [Join us](#) on Facebook, and we'll all waste time together.

* Did **Roland Turnhill** and co have an advantage in steering Akzo Nobel to its £8 billion takeover of ICI? It appears they may have. Men's style bible *Esquire* has named **Slaughter and May** as the third best-dressed outfit in the City, behind BNP Paribas and Goldman Sachs. **Nigel Boardman** - who else? - is cited by the magazine as an example for other lawyers for his effortlessly elegant style of power dress, an accolade that will no doubt provoke pangs of envy among more expensively-clad corporate bigwigs at lesser firms.

* Texas man has an affair. Texas man sends flowers to his girlfriend. Texas man's wife mistakenly finds out. Texas man sues. Leroy Greer has demanded \$1 million in compensation from 1-800-flowers.com for the mental anguish caused by his being rumbled. According to a lawsuit filed in Houston, Greer claims that he arranged with the florist to deliver a \$100 bouquet and a cuddly toy to his girlfriend on the understanding that nothing would be sent to his home address, which he still shares with his estranged wife. Instead, the online florist sent a "thank you" coupon, which his wife found. She called the florist, discovered he had been having an affair and now wants £300,000 extra to settle what was supposed to be an amicable divorce.

* **Roger Wyand, QC**, head of chambers at intellectual property set **Hogarth Chambers**, is the latest UK lawyer to be impersonated by fraudsters. E-mails purportedly from Wyand have been going around offering to split \$10.5 million from the estate of a deceased client - you know how the story goes. A similar scam earlier this year used the name and e-mail address of a young litigation partner at **Allen & Overy**, which took the matter seriously enough to inform the police. Hogarth, when the WC called to inform them, didn't seem all that bothered. The man himself was on holiday and couldn't be reached. Oh well. The Water Cooler was only trying to help.

* Some law firms have taken matters into their own hands to combat negative stereotypes of working in the City, with disastrous consequences. Take **Bristows**, for example, which published an ad in the recruitment section of The Lawyer. The catchphrase "Bristows: a lot of what we do isn't legal" could change the firm's image of the firm more than they may have imagined. A red-faced partner at the firm blamed The Lawyer for the cock-up.

* The story of a man who was barred from bringing an unfair dismissal claim because he applied 88 seconds [after the deadline](#) prompted a barrage of puns and wisecracks from employment solicitors who perhaps shouldn't give up their day jobs. Thomas Ince at Reed Smith Richards Butler: "Gone in 88 seconds! Claimants should seize the day!" James Baker, a solicitor at Macfarlanes: "Mr Beasley was taking a real risk by leaving his submission of his claim to just before midnight on the last day. At least he didn't turn into a pumpkin." Hannah Ford, Stevens & Bolton: "You can't help but feel sympathy for the claimant who failed to beat the buzzer." Good on you all for trying.

* **Fox Mandal Little**, one of India's top law firms, plans to have four lawyers in London by the end of the year as it eyes further international opportunities in Singapore and the US. The London office, which the firm aims to have up and running by December, will be the 300-lawyer firm's first outside the subcontinent. That's according to Legal Week.

* Another UK legal tie-up is on the cards with the announcement that **Davies Arnold Cooper** and **KSB Law** are in formal merger negotiations. If the talks, which are already at an advanced stage, lead to union it would create a 205-lawyer practice with offices in London, Manchester, Spain and Mexico. Last October, DAC merged with Manchester construction boutique Moore & Co.