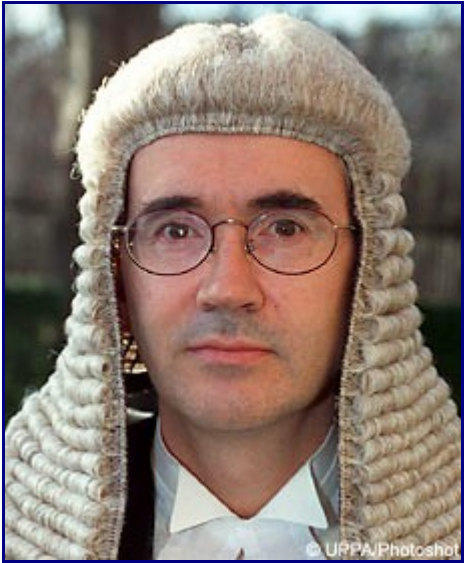


The senior judge who faces trial for flashing on a train

By STEPHEN WRIGHT



Sir Stephen: He denies the charges

A senior judge has been charged with twice exposing himself to a woman on a train.

Lord Justice Richards, who sits in the Court of Appeal, was held by detectives in January after the shocked passenger made a complaint about a male commuter

On the advice of the Crown Prosecution Service, the married father of three was yesterday charged with two counts of exposure after answering police bail.

In a further humiliation, at the time of his arrest he was forced to pose for a police mugshot.

He has also been fingerprinted and asked to provide a DNA sample.

The maximum sentence for a first offence of indecent exposure is six months in jail. Should he be convicted, the judge will almost certainly be sacked.

A British Transport Police spokesman said the allegations relate to two separate incidents on trains in South-West London last year.

The Right Honourable Sir Stephen Richards, 56, who lives in Wimbledon, was originally arrested by BTP following an undercover operation.

The judge was detained on his way to work after the alleged victim picked him out on a train from Wimbledon to Central London.

Accompanied by an undercover detective, the woman identified Sir Stephen as the man who allegedly exposed himself to her last October.

Detectives had no idea that the suspect was a leading judge until they arrested him.

After the arrest in January Sir Stephen insisted he was innocent. He said: "I spoke to police and gave them my full co-operation about an incident last October which I deny. I have not been charged and have been bailed in the usual manner."

Despite the fact that he has now been charged, the £184,000-a-year judge has not been suspended. However, he will not sit in court pending the outcome of the case.

He continues to deny the allegation and has been released on police bail.

The judge has overseen a number of high-profile hearings, and in January ruled in a High Court case brought by the family of Jean Charles de Menezes, the Brazilian shot dead by police who mistook him for a suicide bomber.

Sitting with Mr Justice Roberts, he said the Crown Prosecution Service's decision not to charge individual officers in connection with his death in July 2005 could be referred to the House of Lords.

The judge married in 1976, and he and his wife Lucy have two sons and a daughter.

Educated at King's College School, Wimbledon, and St John's College, Oxford, Sir Stephen was called to the bar in 1975 and became a High Court judge in 1997 before becoming a Lord Justice of Appeal in 2005.

He has also served as deputy chairman of the Boundary Commission for Wales. He lists his recreations as walking and relaxing in the Welsh hills.

A spokesman for the Judicial Communications Office said: "He is not suspended so remains on full pay.

"The Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice have been made aware of the charges. The Judge will not be sitting, pending the outcome of the proceedings. The Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice do not comment on individual cases."

Sir Stephen, who answered bail at Ebury Bridge police station in Central London, was bailed to appear at City of Westminster Magistrates' Court on March 8.