

# One day in the life of a magistrate's court

By Billy Middlesex, Court Watcher UK

## Overview

On a bleak afternoon in October, I was visiting a dreary town and rather than sit and work in the public library I instead chose to see what goes on in the gateway to the criminal justice system. I believe accountability and oversight is vital to monitor what goes on in one of the three branches of government in the UK – the judiciary. The tale below is as true to what I saw as I can make it while maintaining my privacy and complying with a wide range of rules that apply in a court room. I have no formal legal training and have never appeared in any case as a witness, prosecutor/defendant, claimant/respondent, judge, jury member or executioner.

## Getting into the courtroom

To start with I was met by a court security officer whose job it was to search me and ensure all my stuff complied with the regulations. She was surprised that anyone would turn up as a member of the public which is probably better than the olden days when public justice was a spectacle for the crowds! After signing for the safe-keeping of my safety scissors (whoops – left there from an arts and craft night) and every object I had on me being poked and prodded sufficiently I was able to enter the hallowed halls of justice. Or more accurately a bland grey room which served to simply guide you to walk upstairs to where the action happened. Once inside I asked the staff if I could have a sunflower lanyard as I had lost mine and they didn't know what it was (“**Hidden Disabilities Sunflower network** - Lanyards available on request.” Per <https://www.find-court-tribunal.service.gov.uk/courts/XXX>)

## Hearings & Cases

Probation Trainees vs Working Portuguese Man

Remanded the missing man

CPS didn't have any evidence...

... and the Probation Trainees strike back

Wait another bail breach!

A DJ but no music: Driving while Disqualified

## What's next?

I hope to attend a wider range of courts and write about more of what I see – if there's anything you would like me to cover then please create a GitHub Issue so that I can track the requests!

## Verification

If you would like further details of the day such as to see a picture of my handwritten notes, please create a GitHub Issue and provide contact information.

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None of the cases I attended were subject to any reporting restrictions order.

None of this article contains personal information.