Welcome to the Finch Forensic and Expert Witness Services Directory.

Here you will find information about our forensic and expert areas practice, as well as about our experts.

We have repeatedly shown that we have the intellectual rigour and approach needed to confidently opine on contentious civil, commercial and regulatory matters. Our experts (pp. 12–19) are not only trained to the highest levels to deal with complexity and apply analytical methods, but frequently they practice as consultants in industry – our people really do experience what "current", "normal" or "typical" is.

We provide outstanding expert witness services to clients in the legal, insurance, industrial and financial sectors. Our reputation as leading providers of litigation support has grown and developed over almost three decades. We employ and work with outstanding scientists, engineers, health and safety specialists and ex-regulators.

Not all specialisms are detailed here, and we would be happy to discuss your specific needs with you. To give a flavour of our range of expertise, we have selected a few case studies of the more unusual or challenging matters we have dealt with (pp. 04–09).

Do please get in touch about anything you feel we may be able to help with. Our talented support team (p. 11) will assist you and identify the Finch expert that will be an ideal fit.

Dr Richard Brown
Head of Service

Our expert offering

Disease
- Asbestos
- Other substances hazardous to health (e.g. lead, silica, solvents, welding fume, etc)
- Musculoskeletal Disorders

Noise and Vibration
- Noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL)
- Hand arm vibration (HAVS)
- Vibration related Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Whole body vibration injuries
- Vibration white finger
- Noise nuisance
- Planning and noise
- Architectural acoustics
- Building services acoustics
- Environmental acoustics

Engineering
- Mechanical engineering
- Electrical engineering
- Control/instrumentation engineering
- Process engineering
- Civil / structural engineering
- Machinery compliance
- Construction and engineering arbitration and dispute

Safety management and compliance
- Compliance with various legislation and standards
- Safety management systems
- COMAH sites
- Risk assessment and safe systems of work
- Human factors and ergonomics
- Fall from height and falling objects
- Construction safety (CDM)
- Specialist industry knowledge (inc. fairgrounds, agriculture, theatre and film)
- Vulnerable persons, assault, stress, healthcare and education
- Acute injuries from workplace accidents
Read a selection of case studies from our diverse offering

Noise-Induced Hearing Loss and Morticians

Finch consultants visit a diverse range of business premises in the course of their work. Frequently this is to gather information, or to see an accident site for the preparation of an expert report. On one occasion, our expert would have been happy to forego the visit and just write a desktop report.

The Claimant, in this particular case, had previously worked in a mortuary, where he operated a small surgical drill. Through examination, a doctor confirmed that he was suffering from NIHL and he alleged that this was due to the noise exposure from the surgical drill, which he had used for many hours every day over the course of several years, cutting through the skulls and bones of corpses in various stages of decay.
Falling Koalas

A small national park in Australia had become surrounded by farmland, thereby preventing a growing population of koalas from moving on to other areas of forest. Researchers had identified that there would be insufficient food if numbers were not managed and so koalas had to be captured and relocated through human intervention. Koala catching was certainly a more unusual assignment for one of our Finch Senior Consultants, who travelled to the other side of the world to conduct a risk assessment and develop a safety management system for this important conservation project.

The project, lasting several weeks each year, involved a team of people moving through the park to identify koalas hidden in the trees, then coax them down and into large carry crates that could be lifted onto the back of pick-up trucks and transported to other locations. It goes without saying that the hazards and risk controls were unusual and largely unique. For example, walking while looking up at the trees was a hazard in itself – the park surrounds a volcano that had recently, in geological terms, become extinct, so the landscape was strewn with rough, sharp volcanic rock that could easily be tripped over, resulting in injury. Leeches were also prevalent in the undergrowth, as well as venomous snakes. As if that wasn’t enough, Koalas have sharp claws, which they use to grip while climbing and to defend themselves when threatened, and can become very aggressive when agitated.

Overall, the method was to attempt to persuade each koala to come down from a tree by annoying it with a little flag attached to a long pole, which was shaken in front of its face. However, sometimes that didn’t work and someone would need to climb the tree to engage the koala up-close. The problem was that, not only did this create a fall risk for the climber, but it also created a fall risk for the koala, and so the remainder of the team needed to hold out a stretched sheet of canvas, ready to catch the animal if it fell. Falling koalas presented a risk in themselves!

During the first day of our consultant being on-site, the project had to be abandoned owing to the outbreak of bushfire. However, once the fire had been safely extinguished the work was able to be completed, the risk management strategies and work procedures proved successful and, most importantly, no animals were harmed in the making of the safety management system.

Polar Safety

Many countries send teams of scientists to their respective territories in the Antarctic to undertake a wide range of research programmes. Some travel to and from the continent within a single season, but others “over-winter” and head for home during the following summer.

The scientists not only require accommodation, but also fixed and mobile laboratories, over-snow transport, boats, ice drills and all manner of camping equipment. To meet the diverse needs of an operational research base, large numbers of support personnel are also required, ranging from chefs, plumbers and electricians to diesel mechanics, forklift truck drivers and communication technicians. All equipment and personnel – known as “expeditioners”, have to be transported to the continent and brought back, along with all their waste, most often by ship.

One Finch Senior Consultant and a colleague were asked to undertake a root and branches review of the health and safety management of one nation’s Antarctic operations. Having reviewed the written H&S Management System at head office, they joined a voyage south and headed out onto the ice to observe the system in operation, first-hand.

The two-week voyage through the Roaring Forties over the Christmas period ended with a scramble down a ladder into an amphibious vehicle and through the pack ice to a narrow stretch of rock where landing was possible.

An intense week of immersion in research station activities, including trips onto the ice cap – measuring whole-body vibration in the tracked vehicle on the way, participating with the piping of diesel fuel from ship to shore, observing laboratory practices, collecting asbestos samples from redundant buildings, and even washing dishes in the kitchen all provided a great insight to operations. The voyage home was also useful, as it provided opportunity for the Finch consultants to interview returning expeditioners, to verify and augment their observations.

There is no doubt that first-hand experience of the work and activities was invaluable and the health and safety management system was improved as a result. While it was an unusual assignment, with the work needing to be undertaken in such a unique environment, the hazards and the risk management strategies required were not entirely different from those in more conventional workplaces. Perhaps the risk of hitting an iceberg or falling into a crevasse being the only exceptions.
A member of a gun club sued a co-member, alleging that a shotgun was fired too close to his ear when the two were on a rough shoot, resulting in hearing damage.

A Finch acoustic engineering expert was instructed to provide a desktop report on the likely level of exposure. The parties differed on important matters, including their distance apart and the direction of firing.

Using knowledge of shotgun sound levels and muzzle blast directionality, as well as basic geometry, the expert was able to advise the Court on the likely sound levels at the injured party’s ear for a range of scenarios, both from his own gun and that of his shooting partner, and the risk of hearing damage.

A Hollywood actor was injured on set whilst filming a stunt. The scene involved kicking through a pre-weakened wood wall to effect entry to a burning building.

A Finch safety expert provided expert opinion on instruction from the Claimant’s legal team. The opinion indicated that the pre-weakening techniques utilised by the defendant were unsuitable and this had significantly contributed to the serious injury sustained by the actor. In addition to the serious injury, the actor lost significant income because of his incapacity and required many months of physical rehabilitation.

In a claim for acoustic shock it was alleged that the headset being used by a call centre worker was defective, as it had failed to limit the sound level when she was exposed to a sudden, high frequency tone. The engineer instructed on behalf of the Claimant had conducted a test, using a home-made apparatus, to demonstrate the maximum sound level that could be produced by this headset. A Finch acoustic engineering expert, instructed on this occasion on behalf of the Defendant, chose not to conduct a test.

Giving evidence in court, the expert was able to explain, by reference to the relevant standards for telephony equipment, that the Claimant’s test had not been conducted in accordance with a recognised procedure, using the appropriate specialist equipment. The Finch expert chose to rely on a test carried out, post incident, by the headset manufacturer, using the accepted industry standard method; this showed that the maximum achievable sound level was 24 dB lower than that alleged.
Our highly experienced Finch Experts and Support Team

Liz Aitken
Liz joined the company in 1997 and has previous administrative experience in the health, banking and mining industries. She provides administrative support for Experts, Stephen Cowley, Stephen Frost, Simon Hardy and Martin Stear.

Julie Smith
Julie joined the company in 2012 and has previous administration experience in the civil service and automotive industry. Julie primarily works with the Noise and Vibration team, organising their work schedules and providing administrative support on the production of expert witness reports.

Glenis Wykes
Glenis joined the company in 1994 and has previous experience in the mining industry. She is semi-retired and now works with the Noise and Vibration team, transcribing dictation and formatting expert witness reports.

Stephanie Dennis
Steph joined the company in 2016, in a different role. She made the transition into the Finch support team in July 2018. She provides administrative support for Experts, Dom Barraclough, Steve Bennett, Dr Richard Brown, Richard Hoyle, Tristan Pulford, Melvin Sandell and Amanda Trimble.

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Profile:
A consultant engineer with more than 25 years' experience in electromechanical device design, manufacture, application, and installation. Steve has wide experience of plant and equipment, materials handling, physical security, and fire doors in a variety of industries, including agriculture, manufacturing, and construction. Steve is also trained in the Seventeenth Edition Wiring Regulations for Inspection, Test and Certification of Wiring Systems, and Experience of Investigations into product failures, including electrical faults which cause fire, particularly domestic appliances. Steve has also undertaken Bond Solon courses in Civil Law and Procedure, which cover Excellence in Report Writing and Courtroom Skills.

Profile:
A Chartered Health and Safety Practitioner with over 25 years' experience in health and safety, Richard has particular experience in heavy manufacturing (metals and paper), power generation (coal and gas), construction and logistics. He has been awarded a PhD for research into the efficacy of safety culture and behavioural safety programmes in industry and regularly provides expert opinion, having acted for both prosecution and defence in criminal matters, and defendant and claimant in civil matters. He also holds the Cardiff University Bond Solon Certificates in both criminal and civil law.

Richard provides consulting advice to a range of clients and advises on process safety issues, as an experienced and qualified HAZOP chair and scribe. Always learning, he has a year left to complete towards a degree in demolition and has completed his Post Graduate Certificate in Process Engineering. He intends to continue to MSc level in process engineering over the next two years.

Profile:
A Consultant with over 17 years’ professional experience in noise, vibration and acoustics. Teli is an all-rounder in the field of acoustics, with considerable experience in UK and international projects. He has experience in all areas of Building Acoustics (Architectural and Building Services), Environmental Acoustics, including complex EIA assessments, and Vibration Control (building services or transportation induced).

Teli has experience in independent acoustic consultancy and multidisciplinary consultancy environments, both as a technical expert and team leader. He led projects that were recognised at the Association of Noise Consultant Awards – on the themes of Sound Insulation and Transportation Noise.

With Finch, Teli applies his knowledge of acoustics as an expert witness both in providing engineering evidence in occupational disease, the planning sector and in noise nuisance matters.

He has prepared several hundred reports for the Court, providing engineering evidence in relation to occupational disease claims, where he is almost exclusively instructed on a single joint expert basis. Teli has also undertaken Bond Solon courses in Civil Law and Procedure, which cover Excellence in Report Writing and Courtroom Skills.
Dr Stephen Cowley
PhD, MSc(Occ Hyg), BSc(OHS), GCert(Ed), CMOSH, AFoH, FAIHS

**Expertise**
- Health and Safety Management Systems
- Incident Investigation
- Training & Education
- Workplace Traffic Management
- Machinery Safety

**Profile:**
For over 30 years, Stephen has provided health and safety advice in sectors ranging from mining and heavy manufacturing to food, electronics, pharmaceuticals, service industries and government. He regularly provides expert opinion on both civil and criminal matters including both traumatic injury events and occupational disease, and also provides advice as a consultant on a wide range of safety and occupational hygiene matters.

Stephen’s PhD research focused on the marketing of health and safety solutions to decision-makers, linking a special interest in occupation disease to broader health and safety management.

His research has also been funded and undertaken in industries ranging from mining to manufacturing, health, farming, thoroughbred horse racing and the emergency services.

Stephen’s input to undergraduate and postgraduate OHS programs was previously through academic appointment, but continues by through acting as a visiting lecturer in both the UK and Australia.

Steve Frost
BSc CEng MICE

**Expertise**
- Manual Handling & Musculoskeletal Disorders
- Asbestos and Other Substances Hazardous to Health
- Occupational Hygiene & PPE

**Profile:**
Steve has specialised in the field of Geotechnical and Foundation Engineering since 1979. His experience encompasses a wide range of geotechnical techniques applied to a variety of civil engineering situations. He has particular experience in the nuclear industry regarding site investigation, design of large raft foundations required to accommodate seismic loading, all types of pile design and the design of ground anchorages.

He is also experienced in slope stability, retaining wall design, ground stabilisation, the preparation of sites for residential development and the stability of inland waterways. He has acted as a technical expert in litigation matters for the assessment of structural damage caused by ground disturbance, excavation slope instability, tunnel pressurisation, and crane/piling rig collapse incidents caused by foundation failure. He has been trained for Personal Track Safety (PTS) for work involving rail access.

Simon Alexander-Hardy
Domestic / Commercial / Industrial Gas Engineer

**Expertise**
- CP4/1 Combustion Performance Analysis
- CCN1 Domestic Natural Gas Safety
- CKR1 Gas Cookers
- HTR1 Gas Fires and Heaters
- WAT1 Instantaneous Water Heaters
- CENT1 Central Heating Boilers <70 kw
- IPCN1 Commercial Pipework >35 mm
- TPCE1 Test and Purge – UP/1A & UP/1
- CIGA1 Indirect Fired Heating Appliances
- CORT1 Overhead Radiant Heaters
- CODC1 Changeover Domestic – Catering
- CODATA1 Changeover Domestic to Commercial Catering

**Profile:**
A Gas Safe registered gas engineer with 26 years’ experience in domestic, commercial, and industrial gas engineering and maintenance. Simon studied at Basford Hall, Nottingham, gaining level 1, 2, 3, 4 NVQ in gas engineering. He regularly provides expert opinion, having acted for both claimant and defendants in civil matters.

Simon has worked for and alongside industry leading manufacturers and is currently studying to become an assessor of gas engineers within the industry. He also continues to run his own successful gas engineering company, which provides installation, maintenance, and servicing of all types of gas appliances and systems.

Sue Hewitt
BA (Hons) MSc(hons) MIOA

**Expertise**
- Hand Arm Vibration
- Noise Induced Hearing Loss
- Vibration White Finger

**Profile:**
Sue is a consultant with over 30 years’ professional experience in noise and vibration, mostly in the investigation and prevention of occupational exposures associated with ill health. Her employment experience includes research work for HSE, carrying out scientific investigations involving all aspects of measurement and assessment of hand arm vibration and noise exposure.

As a research scientist for HSE and external clients, Sue was responsible for research project design, implementation and management, interpretation of results and production of reports, as well as disseminating the findings through publications and presentations at conferences. She also regularly presented on HSE training courses on hand arm vibration. She has been a practicing expert witness since 2018.

Sue has undertaken Bond Solon courses in Civil Law and Procedure, which cover Excellence in Report Writing and Courtroom Skills.
Richard Hoyle
BEng Hons IEng MSOE

Expertise
- Product Liability
- Mechanical/ Materials Failures
- Incident Investigation & Reconstruction
- Mechanical Engineering & General Health & Safety
- Lifting Equipment, Operations, Machinery, Accessories
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Risk Assessments

Profile:
A consultant incorporated engineer with approximately 15 years of forensic engineering experience, ranging from collision and incident reconstruction, mechanical/materials failures of domestic items to large lifting machines, investigations into product liability and safety across the leisure, manufacturing and distribution industry, as well as design and testing review under the Machinery Directive (CE marking).

Richard has 8 years' experience of conducting Statutory Inspections under LOLER, PUWER and PSSR including, 10,000 tonne cranes, air pressure plants, onshore wind turbines (0.3 MW) - associated lifting, access/rescue equipment and pressure plant, forklift trucks, theatre equipment, and hydraulic and traction passenger/goods lifts. He has conducted expert witness work across all levels of Court in the UK, Northern Ireland, Eire and Bermuda.

Richard has also undertaken the Bond Solon courtroom skills course in Civil Law and Procedure, which cover Excellence in Report Writing and Courtroom Skills.

Peter Milner
MSc MIOA

Expertise
- Whole Body Vibration and Hand-Arm Vibration
- Noise Induced Hearing Loss
- Vibration White Finger
- General Health and Safety
- PUWER, PSSR and Associated Statutory Inspections
- Forensic Incident Investigation and Failure Analysis
- CE marking and Risk Assessment for Machinery Safety, Design Considerations and Testing

Profile:
A consultant with over 40 years’ experience in noise and vibration, Peter’s employment experience includes research, consultancy, local authority enforcement and private industry. A large part of Peter’s working life was spent working for local authorities in Environmental Health Departments Pollution Control Sections. He initially worked for Sheffield City Council and then for York City Council as the Principal Pollution Control Officer where he was responsible for a team that enforced legislation relating to noise, vibration, water, smoke and land pollution.

Peter has spent over 20 years working for consultancies as a Senior Acoustic Consultant. He has been extensively involved with many multidisciplinary projects to provide Environmental Impact Assessments and Environmental Statements for clients including wind turbine clusters. His work also included large occupational noise assessments, including several large airports around the UK. Other consultancy activities during this period included assessments of exposure to hand-arm and whole-body vibration.

Peter has completed over 400 litigation reports in the field of noise induced hearing loss, hand arm vibration and environmental noise for jointly instructed cases, and cases just for the Claimant and Defendant.

Dr Chris Nelson
BSc (Hons) PhD MIOA

Expertise
- Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome and/or Vibration-Related Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Noise-Induced Hearing Loss
- Whole-Body Vibration Injuries
- Occupational Exposure to Noise
- Whole-Body Vibration and Hand-Arm Vibration

Profile:
Chris has been a practising expert witness since 2007 and is a consultant with over 35 years’ professional experience in noise, vibration and other health and safety matters. He is a former HM Specialist Inspector (Noise and Vibration) with the Health and Safety Executive (1987 to 2007). His previous employment experience includes research, consultancy and educational roles with the Institute of Naval Medicine (Ministry of Defence) and the Institute of Sound and Vibration Research (University of Southampton).

Chris has been awarded a PhD for his study of Vibration White Finger/Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome in dockyard workers, 1992. He also has extensive knowledge and experience of risk assessment, control and management for occupational exposure to noise and vibration, as well as the measurement of noise, hand-arm vibration and whole-body vibration exposures. Due to his expertise, he was Convener of the European and International standards-making committees on hand-arm vibration between 1994 and 2007. He has Bond Solon training in Courtroom Skills and Witness Familiarisation. He also has training in Report Writing and Cross Examination from the Expert Witness Institute. Chris also has experience in giving evidence in court.

Tristan Pulford
CEng MEng FS Eng (TÜV) MIMechE

Expertise
- Incident Investigation
- Pressure Systems and Pressure Vessels
- Safety Management Systems
- Work at Height and Falling Objects
- Workplace Transport
- Construction Safety (incl. CDM)
- Vibration
- Workshop and Powered Tooling

Profile:
A Chartered Mechanical Engineer with over 9 years’ experience in Engineering compliance and health and safety in oil and gas, heavy manufacturing (metals and glass), power generation, construction and workplace transport. Tristan regularly provides expert opinions and reports, in both criminal and civil matters. He is an active consultant, providing advice to a range of industries and sectors, from process safety to machinery safety issues. As such, he has a wide knowledge of many regulations and standards that cover a wide array of industries.

Tristan has also undertaken Bond Solon courses in Civil Law and Procedure, which cover Excellence in Report Writing and Courtroom Skills.
Melvin Sandell
PG Dip OCC H&S Grad IOSH AFSM

Profile:
An ex. Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Regulator with 20 years of experience in both regulating and consulting on the application of, health and safety law. Melvin has strong experience in the investigation of fatal and serious accidents in agriculture, forestry, food production and, especially, the entertainment and leisure industries. Owing to this expertise, he was the HSE Entertainment and Leisure Policy Sector operational policy lead for entertainment and leisure between 2009 and 2017.

Melvin provides expert opinion for prosecution and defence in both criminal matters and defendant and claimant in civil matters, as well as providing general expert opinion and consultancy services to a range of clients and industries. He is the author of much of HSE’s guidance (including HSGs) for the entertainment and leisure industry and is the lead or co-author of numerous industry guidance documents. He currently sits on the Amusement Devices Safety Council (ADSC), The Association of British Theatre Technicians (ABTT), Technical Standards Committee and the Theatre Safety Committee.

Melvin has also undertaken Bond Solon courses in Civil Law and Procedure, which cover Excellence in Report Writing and Courtroom Skills.

Martin Stear
BSc Dip OHFH

Profile:
Martin is a fully qualified occupational hygienist (Diploma of Professional Competence), with over 30 years' experience. He spent 10 years with the National Occupational Hygiene Services Ltd (NOHS), based in Manchester, where he gained experience of all areas of occupational hygiene with regards to the assessment and control of exposure to hazardous substances. This included extensive experience of all practical areas of asbestos from sampling to the management of major removal contracts.

In 1993, he joined HSE as a Specialist Inspector (Occupational Hygiene) and was promoted to Principal Specialist Inspector in 1997. He headed the Organic Chemicals and Asbestos section and gained extensive experience developing national risk management strategies aimed at reducing risks to health in various industry sectors. Throughout this work, Martin has represented HSE nationally and internationally, developing workable and often innovative solutions, aimed at reducing workplace risks. Key areas of work have included solvents, coating powders, metalworking fluids in the engineering industry, cytotoxic drugs and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, amongst many others. With regards to asbestos he provided technical expertise to all parts of HSE, other government departments and ministers, as well as sitting on various joint industry liaison groups and committees.

He provided technical expertise to the development of legislation and has authored various guidance documents on asbestos. He left HSE in 2004 and has since provided expert opinion on local authority stress cases and cases of assault on healthcare workers.

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Amanda Trimble
BA (Hons) PG Dip in Occupational Health and Safety

Profile:
Amanda is a rounded professional with experience in schools, special education settings, and elderly care, as well as a range of local authority provision, including Estates, Leisure and Grounds Maintenance.

Amanda has undertaken Bond Solon courses in Civil Law and Procedure, which cover Excellence in Report Writing and Courtroom Skills. She also provides consultancy services within her specialist areas.

Timothy Ward
BSc (Hons) MIOA

Profile:
A Consultant with over 30 years’ of professional experience in noise, vibration and other health and safety matters. Timothy is a former HM Principal Specialist Inspector (Noise and Vibration) with the Health and Safety Executive (1999 to 2012). His employment experience includes technical specialist, regulatory, research and consultancy roles.

Timothy has extensive knowledge and experience of assessment, control and management of risks from occupational noise and vibration, as well as the development and interpretation of regulations, guidance and benchmarks for good practice. He also has a wealth of experience in the measurement and assessment of noise, hand-arm vibration and whole-body vibration exposures. He works as a specialist investigator and provider of specialist opinion.

Timothy has also undertaken Bond Solon courses in Civil Law and Procedure, which cover Excellence in Report Writing and Courtroom Skills.