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Divorce 'out of date'

THE PRESENT SYSTEM of divorce is out of date and grossly ineffective" and "a throwback to trial by battle," said Mr Justice Coleridge speaking at the launch of the Central London Collaborative Forum last week.

Coleridge J described the process as only a little more progressive than the Spanish Inquisition to the gathering of leading divorce practitioners from London's best known solicitors' firms who organised the event to mark their endorsement of the collaborative law process for big money divorces.

The collaborative process is, they say, just as appropriate when dealing with wealthy cou-

ples as any other: one of their number has recently concluded a case involving an international couple with assets over £35m.

Collaborative law first came to Britain from the US four years ago. It has been taken up by divorce specialists, who have recognised that the search for agreed solutions to otherwise contentious issues can produce an agreed settlement without the rancour and aggression that often poison post-divorce relationships.

Over 850 solicitors have now been trained in collaborative techniques and, according to Jane Simpson, head of family law at Manches, there are many more on the waiting list.