



**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE LAW
AND
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIETY 2011-2012**



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After being an active member of the Law and Criminal Justice Society in both my first and second year, I was excited at the prospect of working to organise the events and competitions, rather than just being a participant or an observer. Given the multitude and quality of the events that the Law and Criminal Justice Society have always had to offer, this was no easy prospect. Luckily I was blessed with a Committee of driven, similarly minded and hardworking individuals, who often sacrificed much time for the sole purpose of creating and maintaining a Society to be proud of. However, I like to think we also had a lot of fun along the way as well. This year the LCJS was redeveloped and commercialised by utilising our newly built strong social media and online presence, as well as developing relationships with private commercial sponsors. In the following paragraphs I hope to give some insight into the work that we, as a Committee, undertook. As well as this, this report will reflect upon some of the achievements of our members. Broadly speaking the societies activities can be broken down into three strands, namely:

- Competitions;
- career events and skills development;
- social and informal events.

Competitions

I have always been a keen advocate (pun not fully intended) of developing skills through competitive extracurricular activities. My history with Mooting and Negotiations fuelled my desire to expand this section of the Society further. To do this, we introduced the Internal Debating competition, external Advocacy and Client Interviewing Competitions and a new European External Mooting Competition. These new additions came alongside our longstanding tradition of Internal and External Mooting and Negotiations competitions.

Mooting

Emma Pierce was the Mooting Officer but I felt it important to say that this year a lot of emphasis was placed on teaching and nurturing the ability of new mooters. This was

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achieved through innovations such as the mentoring of the beginner mooters. Small changes such as this led to measureable achievements for the new mooters in terms of progress through the mooting competition, personal and professional development and in some cases winning moots at a national level.

Negotiations

This year's internal competition comprised of five rounds and attracted over 50 participants. In the interest of long term consistency, the scoring criteria were amended this year so that it is closer to that of the national competition. As well as developing new scenarios to use, the Negotiations Officers developed a bank of scenarios listing when they were last used so that the competition can continue to be consistently good in years going forward.

Alex Jordan, Amanda Winfieldale and Callum Smith and Rachel Hennessey fought their way through four rounds to compete in the final of the internal competition. The final was, once again, kindly hosted by Bond Pearce LLP in their Plymouth Office. Callum (Deputy Negotiation Officer 2012-2013) and Rachel narrowly clenched victory from Alex and Amanda. Heather and Stacy chose some unusual, yet very appropriate, trophies for the winners, as can be seen in the picture below.



Left paper weight for finalists, right negotiation finalists trophy



Left Rachel Hennessy, right Callum Smith

This year two teams of two were taken to the external negotiations competition. Dan Cahill, Luke Jones, Amanda Winfieldale and Alex Jordan went to the national competition to represent Plymouth and came away with a very respectable joint third place. This is the first time that Plymouth has ranked in the higher tables of the national competition, so congratulations to Dan, Luke, Amanda and Alex.

Debating

Debating was introduced this year to complement the already well-established mooting and debating competitions. Debating was a natural fit for the LCJS as it allows participants to sharpen their public speaking and analytical skills, but it isn't as time consuming as mooting and negotiations. Debating is also very accessible as all of the debates centred around current affairs. This internal debating competition saw 44 participants go through up to five rounds with such propositions as 'Should the Human Rights Act 1998 be repealed', 'Should Britain leave the European Union' and 'Should cannabis be legalised.' The finalists, Ian Darcy, Christa Feltham, Jasmine Bennett and Alice Carter-Taylor, forwarded some excellent arguments in front of His Honour Judge Taylor. The participants also took questions from a keen audience who were raring to interject and dissect their arguments. Despite the closely fought competition only one pair could be victorious. Jasmine and Alice were declared the winners by His Honour Judge Taylor and were rewarded with the flashy trophies seen below.



Left Jasmine Bennett, right Alice Carter-Taylor

Client Interviewing

Chelsea Cater and Nicola Ferriday represented Plymouth University at the newly introduced National Client Interviewing Competition. After their success at the Regional competition, Nicola and Chelsea went on to perform very well at the Nationals, but unfortunately they just missed out and didn't come away victorious. Given that this is the first time Plymouth has competed in the Client Interviewing competition for many years, I think everyone will agree that it is still a very good result.

This year the Committee also worked closely with the Law School to attempt to put an Internal Client Interviewing Competition together. Given the organisation involved and the short time frame the competition did not materialise, however the idea and the initial building blocks to allow the competition to be run were confidently left in the hands of the new committee.

Events

Cheese and Wine Evening

The cheese and wine evening is most definitely the LCJS' flagship event. Set within the wonderful backdrop of the nearly refurbished and replenished National Marine Aquarium, the Cheese and Wine evening is a perfect opportunity for eager students to meet and network with professionals from a variety of different industries. This year particular emphasis was

placed upon maintaining an optimal student to professional ratio. With over 60 professionals and around 140 students, the ratio sustained was around 2:1.

We were fortunate to be joined by professionals from local law firms and chambers, as well as local businesses, law enforcement, Lecturers from the Law School, public sector employees and voluntary sector workers. The Cheese and Wine evening has been increasingly refined over the years, so it didn't require much in the way of change. This year we simply ensured that last year's not-so-popular Yarg was avoided and the choice of available wines was extended to include the crowd (and student favourite) of Rosé.

The new 'Law Forum'

The Law Forum has been an event run by the Law Society for a very long time. This year it was decided that instead of running it as a free-standing event, we would work with the Innocence Project Plymouth (see their article [here](#) for more details). The subject for discussion was Expert Evidence in trials. The panel included His Honour Judge Taylor, Jason Beale, Nigel Powers QC and Nigel Lyons. The event saw an increased turnout, both in terms of professionals and students, and, with refreshments being served afterwards, there was an opportunity for a mini networking session.

Invitational Dinner to Lincolns Inn and Inner Temple's talk at Bristol University

We were keen to try to give more information about the Bar to our members this year; particularly as the nearest BPTC is over 100 miles away so information on a face-to-face basis isn't easily readily available. The LCJS fully subsidised travel to Bristol to attend a talk organised by Inner Temple which described the benefits and drawbacks to a career at the Bar and clearly lay out the reality of pursuing such a career.

Similarly, the invitational Dinner to Lincolns Inn gave over 10 of our members the chance to dine within the beautiful Great Hall at Lincolns Inn. Prior to the three course meal, practising barristers from London, the circuit and the employed Bar gave some insight into their day-to-day life as well as their journey in reaching the Bar.

Social and Socials

The Society has always been more than just a springboard into networking and career opportunities, it has always been important for the Society to maintain a social element. A lot of the best socials are held after formal events, when students can exhale and relax after an evening of networking and competing in the various competitions. For the LCJS social our members enjoyed free access to Oceana and its VIP room, along with some complimentary champagne. With a strong turnout and plenty of UV paint being splashed around, the rather boozy evening was an all round success with stories still being recanted

months down the line. Other socials were held through the year, such as the Christmas social where the festive cheer was spread with free Christmas hats and reindeer antlers to all members who attended.

The Law Ball

The Law Ball is by far the biggest social event on the LCJS calendar. This year's event was held in the charming Mariner Suite within Holiday Inn on Plymouth Hoe. Along with the 90 LCJS members, legal professionals and lecturers who made a particular contribution over the year, were also in attendance. The music for the night was provided by the unusually named Orangutan Wheelbarrow. The charity raffle raised over £230.00 for Mill Ford School a Plymouth based school who deal with children with severe learning disabilities. The money raised was to help build an outdoor sensory garden to assist children who don't have fully functional senses.

With Thanks

I would like to take one final opportunity to thank everyone that made the year a success. I look forward to hearing about the successes of the LCJS in years to come.

To find out more, contact:

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