



# CUTTING THROUGH

THE QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY BAR SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



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**CALL: 2015  
CHAMBERS:  
MONCKTON**

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### CALENDAR

#### 25th of November

Life within the Criminal  
Justice System

#### 22nd of November

Law Soc Boat Ball  
[Tickets £15 for non-  
members]

### MOOTING SOCIETY

The mooting society will offer students an opportunity to practice mooting skills. Themes will often be announced here.

### TOPICS

If you have any topics that you would like the Bar Society newsletter to cover, please do get in touch and let us know, via our website.

## CUTTING THROUGH

Again a warm welcome back. This week we are back to our usual format, save for a review of our recent events, the first with the inspiring **Judge Rea** and the second a panel event on the **Introduction to the Bar**. Both events were incredibly successful and we thank all of you that joined us, and we hope you found the evenings as interesting and inspiring as we did. It is now reading week, it has come round incredibly quickly in my eyes, and presents a wonderful chance to catch up on reading, sleep and those netflix series your friends have been telling you to watch for weeks. So whilst fright night didnt mean Brexit just yet, lets celebrate another week of getting to hear about the ongoing deliberations.

## EVENT REVIEWS

### AN EVENING WITH JUDGE REA

On Thursday, we had the honour of hosting an informative evening with Judge Rea. Being a reputable Barrister and Deputy District Judge, she used her years of experience to teach everyone attending unique life lessons about the Bar. Showcasing her great oratorical skills, she presented a series of captivating stories.

From these, we could all extract precious pieces of advice, such as being prepared at all times. This is crucial especially for a young Barrister learning their way. Other significant guidance regarded confidence. Specifically, never giving in to the intimidation your adversaries may push.

At the drinks' reception, all those attending had the chance to talk to Judge Rea in a relaxed environment. As such, attendees had the opportunity to ask specific questions, tailored to their chosen career path. The event was a memorable evening, both for the committee of the Bar Society and its guests, as everyone got a valuable insight into the life of a successful Barrister and Judge.

We were honoured to host Judge Rea and will no doubt be asking her to return in the wake of her newest project, a podcast regarding Artificial Intelligence and the law.

### INTRO TO THE BAR EVENT

On Tuesday, we had the pleasure of hosting both Barristers and Inn representatives.

In a quick panel event we were illuminated as to each individuals route to the Bar and a snippet of their day to day practice [if such thing is knowable at the Bar]. Fan favourites of the evening were; always bring snacks in your bag and make friends with your clerks early on. The merriment of the evening continued to a drinks reception where eager students were able to quiz our lovely panelists about their respective fields and any advice they had for them. It was especially delightful to welcome back several members of QMUL Alumni, who dismantled the belief that the Bar is an unattainable task and instead offered words of encouragement for the aspiring barristers in the room. As always a joy to host and attend.

## Why did you choose to become a barrister?

I was a state school primary teacher before I came to the Bar, so I already knew that I enjoyed working closely with others to try to improve outcomes for individuals. I had also seen from this career that I liked using my voice to attempt to achieve change! As well as the opportunity for intellectual challenge, and the drama of the court room, I was drawn to the bar by the prospect of involvement in cases which impact more widely than upon just one small group at a time. Public law litigation has the potential to touch all in society, for example if primary legislation or a nationwide policy is challenged, and I thought that involvement in that sphere would make for an exciting career.

## How did you choose your current chambers?

First, I knew that I wanted to practise in public law, and that most sets combine this with other areas of law, so the question I had to answer was "public law with what?". Monckton mixes public law with areas including competition law, commercial law and EU law. I liked the idea that, at Monckton, I could be on my feet early on in my career doing judicial review and other public law challenges, often representing clients in receipt of legal aid, and could mix this with competition or commercial cases, where I would be working as part of a bigger team of barristers, being led by and learning from silks in chambers, often in high value cases. Second, having had a previous career, I felt the importance of enjoying being at your place of work and with your colleagues, given how much of our lives is spent this way. Monckton had a reputation amongst my GDL cohort - thanks to those who did mini pupillages there - for being a friendly, supportive and dynamic chambers. This inspired me to find out more about them, and ultimately to apply for pupillage.

## How, if at all, has your other degree(s)/careers aided in your job?

I remember being asked this during pupillage interviews: "What transferable skills has teaching taught you?" was a popular question. It seems to me that what the two professions have in common is at least this: in both, the job centrally involves delivering a series of oral presentations, which will need to be convincing - no matter how confident you may be feeling or how new the subject matter is to you. In each, you must take the time to research and prepare, before presenting to your audience, attempting to be as engaging and persuasive as possible, in order to keep your listeners on side with you. In both cases the possibility of being heckled is very real (albeit I've found judges' way of doing it to be slightly more restrained!).

## Do you have a speciality? And how did you find yourself in that speciality?

As I am a junior junior, I am still trying my hand at everything my chambers has to offer. I have a particular interest in public law, which currently makes up about half of my practice. As I've already said, I deliberately hunted for a set of chambers which had a strong reputation for public law. Competition law is also a significant part of my practice, and I did not have any experience of it before joining Monckton, but I have discovered that I enjoy it a lot. I also do commercial cases, which provide valuable opportunities for juniors to be on their feet early in their career.

## Do you think your area of law will be affected by Brexit, or has it already?

I have no doubt that my practice will be affected at least somewhat by Brexit, but the details of how remain to be seen, and will of course be dependent upon the terms of our exit. The judicial review challenges to public decision-making in which I am involved may be the part of my practice which continues in the most similar form to today, albeit grounds of challenge founded in EU law will either change or in some cases disappear. Brexit's impact may potentially be felt more in the competition or commercial work that I do, where some of my cases involve claimants who are fighting to vindicate what are currently EU law rights. In my view, many rights and obligations derived from EU law are unlikely to disappear altogether, but the means of giving effect to them may well change. My chambers has a lot of expertise in EU law, which we are now turning to Brexit-related advice and litigation. I am sure that the interpretation of retained EU law will be a theme of all our practices for many years to come.

## How would you describe your work life balance?

It's a perpetual work in progress. I remember my Head of Chambers once telling me that working weekends was "a bad habit". He meant that once you get into a pattern of taking work home, it is hard to break, so it is worth making a concerted effort each week to manage your time effectively so you don't need to take work home at the weekend. I think there's a lot of truth in this. Of course, it is easier said than done but, at my chambers, it is possible to keep most of the weekend for yourself most of the time with a bit of self-discipline during the week, and by being sensible and realistic with the clerks about how much new work you have capacity to take on.

## Is there anything about your career at the bar that has surprised you?

I'm surprised by how much enjoyment I get from being self-employed. Unlike with some of my colleagues, this was not particularly a pull factor to the bar for me, as I hadn't had any issues with being employed as a teacher. Yet now that I'm experiencing it, I really enjoy the freedom that it brings. I like the feeling that your practice is your own project and responsibility, and yours to develop as best you can.

## What has been the most challenging aspect of life at the Bar?

The job inevitably involves moments of high stress: when two cases require attention at exactly the same time; when an important document needs to be sent to court for a 4pm deadline but last-minute changes are needed; when something unexpected happens in court and you need to react quickly. I found these to be a particular challenge because I'm someone who feels much more comfortable preparing in advance rather than working until the last minute. However, I am also finding that repeated exposure to these kinds of high-pressure moments helps to build the familiarity and skills required to deal with them effectively. I now find it more helpful to think of plans and preparation as a rough guide rather than a blueprint: not to mention that careful planning is the most effective way to deal with the unexpected in court.

## Is there anything else that you would like to achieve within your career?

As I'm only in my fourth year post-pupillage, the answer is definitely "yes"! I am still at a stage where I am trying a lot of things for the first time, and I am - first and foremost - looking forward to developing greater expertise in my chosen areas of practice. Whist for the moment I enjoy being led by more senior barristers, because I can learn from their advice as well as by watching them, I am also looking forward in the future to leading my own teams. Eventually, I would like to take silk so that I can lead barristers working on cases of social and political importance.

## What piece of advice would you give to law students interest in the bar?

Mini pupillages and court visits are invaluable when working out whether the reality of life at the bar, within an area of practice, or in a certain set of chambers, matches your expectations. At one stage, I had originally thought of going into criminal law, as I had enjoyed it as an academic subject, but I realised on mini pupillages that it was not the specialism to which I was best suited in practice. By contrast, visiting my chambers - Monckton - confirmed for me that I would enjoy working in that environment and atmosphere. You should remember that you can spend more than 40 years in your chambers, so during mini pupillages and interviews you should see yourself as choosing your chambers as much as they are choosing you. It is vital to find a set where you can enjoy your time and feel fulfilled.

# GOT A SPARE HOUR? GUILT FREE ENTERTAINMENT

REMAIN IN THE SPHERE OF LAW WHILST REMOVING  
YOUR NOSE FROM YOUR BELOVED TEXTBOOK

## CHANGING TO LAW

### FILM: ERIN BROCKOVICH [2000] WHERE TO FIND IT - NETFLIX

Based on a true story, the plot follows a woman - Erin Brockovich. After a car accident which wasn't her fault, and courtroom antics leaving her wanting more, Erin stumbles across hidden files that expose a water contamination cover up. She investigates further and the rest is history. If you need remotivating this reading week, kick back and feel inspired



### PODCAST: FINANCIAL TIMES THE CAREER CHANGERS WHERE TO FIND IT - THE FINANCIAL TIMES

This week's recommended podcast features a series by the Financial Times, 'The career changers.' The current episode follows the story of a stay-at-home mother that decided to take what some would call a radical step and become a solicitor at Linklaters. The prospect of changing your career and lifestyle can be intimidating. But fear not, as we are here to reassure you. Whether you are currently studying a degree other than law or have finished university and wish to enter the world of law, this podcast is the perfect way to calm those negative thoughts. So, sit back, relax and enjoy one inspiring story!



It is now very common for people to come to the Bar having already tried something else. Either through an alternative degree, and then converting or from an alternative career and making the switch. The Bar is always looking for bright, creative and intellectually stimulated individuals - don't rule out a career at the Bar just because you haven't studied law at university.