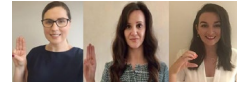




LAW SCHOOL NEWS

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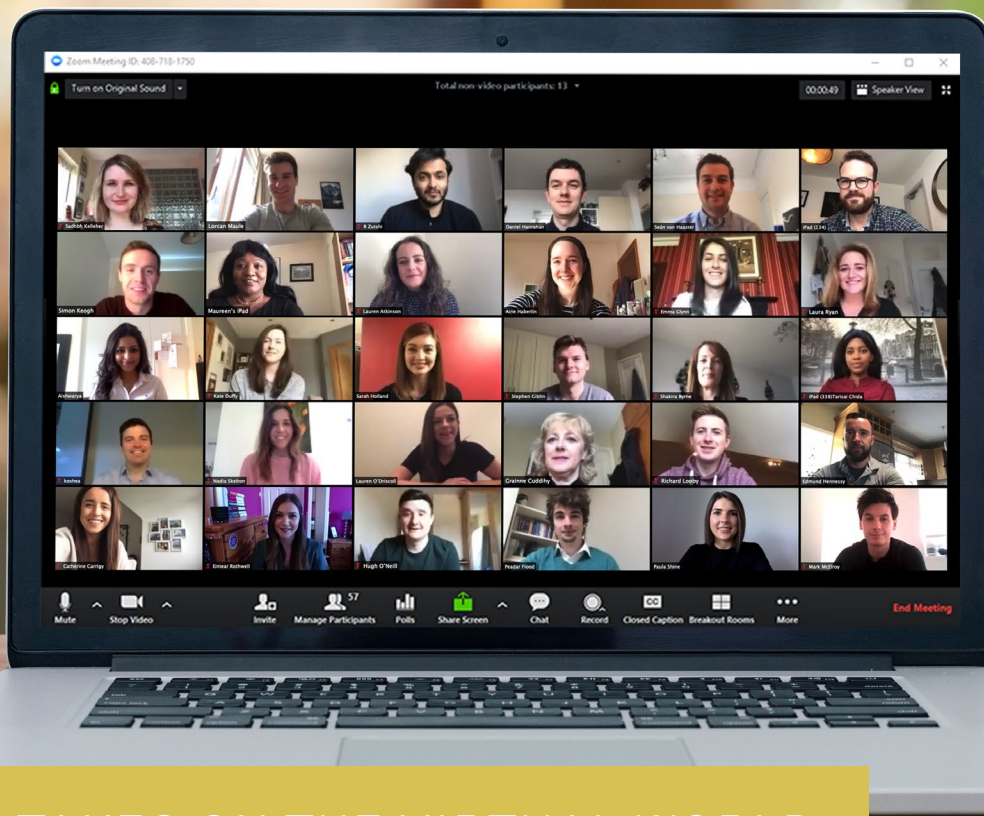
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PPC II TAKES ON THE VIRTUAL WORLD

On 07 April 2020 almost 450 trainee solicitors made history as the first group undertaking the inaugural online Professional Practice Course II (PPC II).

Responding to COVID-19, the Law School adapted quickly to deliver 100% of our educational offering online, through pre-recorded e-lectures, workshops and skills sessions supported by Zoom.

The online PPC II was designed with an emphasis on usability, mobile friendliness and student-centric learning. The new structure provided all the benefits of our traditional face-to-face tuition with a sense

of connected learning within the virtual classroom. There was a particularly focus on empowering trainees by providing access to lectures and course materials remotely to be consumed at their own pace.

Trainee solicitor Tara O'Donoghue (Eugene F Collins) was part of the PPC II and shares her experience with us.



"The Law School recognised the challenges facing trainee solicitors during COVID-19 and provided us with extensive training and guidance on how to best manage our new online timetable.

The team provided a safe and positive platform for trainees, encouraging peer-to-peer engagement and provided funding for PPC II Clubs and Societies.

After a few weeks of using Zoom to catch up with colleagues between e-lectures, it has now become second nature to send a link to friends or to our tutorial group."

SIGN LANGUAGE SOCIETY MAKES CONTACT



During PPC II the Law School provided trainee solicitors with funding to organise a six-week course of sign language classes.

The classes, tailored to the legal profession, were created and taught by Assistant Professor in TCD Patrick Matthews and ISL interpreter Pauline McMahon and, in the light of the Covid 19 pandemic, took place via Zoom.

Trainee solicitors Siobhan Matthews, Tara O'Donoghue & Molly O'Regan pictured above led the first Legal Sign Language Society. The

programme provided trainee solicitors with the skills to communicate with deaf clients and an understanding of working with sign language interpreters in a legal setting.

The classes not only gave new language skills to trainees but also improved communication skills between trainees and highlighted the importance of non-verbal signals to clients.



REFLECTING ON THE JESSUP MOOT

Our Law School Team triumphed in the national rounds of the 2020 Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition. We are very proud of Shauna Scannell (Matheson), Darren McConnon (EirGrid), Louise O'Callaghan (McCann Fitzgerald) and Samuel Elliott (Matheson), pictured with the cup.

Trainee Solicitor Darren McConnon reflects on the experience.

Looking back, the most rewarding part of the experience was the amazing journey to the International Rounds. I was very fortunate to share this with an incredible team. Our submissions were the result of hours of practice, research, and argument amongst ourselves. Throughout our time competing we faced several hurdles, but we were absolutely delighted to win the Irish National Rounds. My fascination with international law is ever-growing and the Jessup experience will stay with me forever.

Team coach: Deirdre Potenz, McCann FitzGerald

PRE-PANDEMIC



Environmental Moot Court Competition.

Our Law Society team placed third in the virtual Stetson International Environmental Moot Court Competition. Congratulations to trainee solicitors Peter Carvill, Karolina Rozhnova (William Fry) and Fiachra MacElhatton (Maples). Coached by T P Kennedy.



International Law School Mediation Tournament

Congratulations to the winners of the INADR International Law School Mediation Tournament 2020, PPC II trainee solicitors Paula O'Halloran (CDS Law & Tax) David Murphy (Michael Houlihan & Partners) and Grainne Hussey (Eversheds Sutherland). Coached by John Lunney.



Law Society of Ireland Moot Court Competition

The winners of the Law Society of Ireland Moot Court Competition 2020 are PPC I trainee solicitors Eamonn Butler (Arthur Cox) and Darragh Bollard (Philip Lee). Darragh was also awarded 'Best Individual Advocate' in the Final. Competition organiser: Dr Geoffrey Shannon.



Blackhall Fundraising

In February 2020 our PPC I trainee solicitors handed over a cheque for €51,274 to the Alzheimer Society of Ireland, the result of their fundraiser Strictly Blackhall. Pictured (l to r) are Louise Murray, Jordan Lynch, Pat McLoughlin (Alzheimer Society of Ireland), Aisling Doyle and Nicole Jones. Congratulations to all the trainees involved!



Street Law Prize-winners

Pictured at the February 2020 Street Law Conferring Ceremony are The Hon. Mr. Justice Max Barrett with trainee solicitors Laura Casey and Mark O'Reilly, prize-winners for their lesson plan on Freedom of Expression/Hate Speech.



Street Law Prize-winners

Pictured at the February 2020 Street Law Conferring Ceremony are The Hon. Mr. Justice Max Barrett with trainee solicitors Georgina Forde and Lorraine Sheridan, prize-winners for their hosting of a Mini Mock Trial.

TRAINEESHIP IN THE TIME OF COVID-19



Niamh Hanbidge speaks to us about drawing support from the trainee solicitor community, and returning to Eversheds Sutherland.

Returning to the office after a break can be somewhat stressful, not the least to say during the Covid-19 pandemic. I had a really great few months at Blackhall and thoroughly enjoyed my time on PPC I.

We were very fortunate to finish our last exam the day before the restrictions came into place. Flash forward two weeks, and I am back in the office on my second rotation (albeit remotely). I did a pre-seat last year, so personally, starting back was not too daunting. Nonetheless, the adjustment to working remotely and meeting new teams was certainly on my mind.

Unique challenge

As trainees, you are conscious to make a good impression and to be a useful asset to the team. In the beginning, I think a lot of trainees like myself were worried about how this pandemic could impact our professional development. My fellow trainees have been a great support where we really are all helping each other as I think this situation is a unique challenge for everyone.

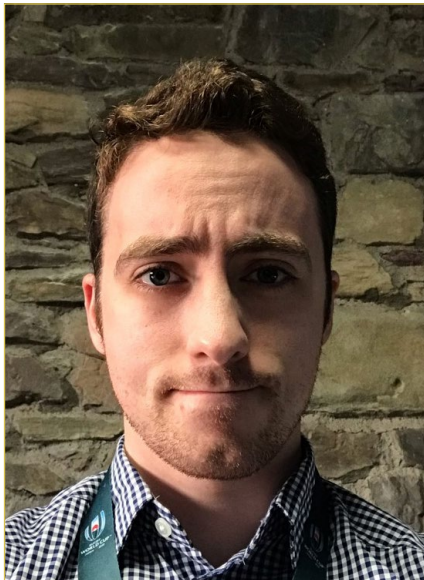
Fortunately I am placed in the Property Department, where I am getting to apply knowledge from PPC I. This has been very helpful amongst the uncertainty of it all. Within the first few hours on Day 1, it became clear to me that Zoom was now a way of life.

It was really great to see the effort people were putting in to engage on video calls. Everyone is so positive and making the most of it. Joining a new team remotely was a new experience, but I have to say I felt very welcomed and the whole process was fairly seamless. While at first it was unusual to build new relationships remotely, it showed real collaboration and support by all involved.

Adapt quickly

I think there was a misconception that the world of law is so heavily paper-based and therefore the profession would struggle to function with remote working. Seeing how well the Property Department and the overall firm have adapted to remote working has been very impressive. Of course, that is not to say there have not been the odd tech glitches that send you spiralling! On the grand scheme of things however, starting back as a Trainee during the lockdown has been a very positive experience. I think it has been a real test for firms to show their culture and value towards its employees. Like others, I am definitely looking forward to getting back to the office and easing towards normality.

This lockdown has made me really appreciate the work solicitors do and how well the profession can adapt in the face of ambiguity.



Sean Duggan speaks to us about drawing support from the trainee solicitor community, and continuing his training through the PPC Hybrid.

I've always been determined to have a career in law that didn't force me to sacrifice other parts of my life where I found value, particularly spending time with my friends and family, and keeping tabs on my mental and physical health. I had moved to Dublin for a time while in college, but I was never able to obtain the work-life balance I wanted in the traditional large Dublin traineeship setting. I was fortunate to find a great job working in an in-house legal team in Cork, but the thought of having to disassemble the life I'd built and move back to Dublin to attend Blackhall was always an obstacle.

Next Year's Goal

I started to plateau after a few years as a paralegal but it never felt like quite the right time to attend the PPC I. Investing time and emotional energy in the FE-1s was even more difficult, since I wasn't ever sure I wanted to pay the price for succeeding. Money, personal plans and work commitments always made qualifying "Next Year's Goal".

PPC Hybrid

The blended on-site/online model of PPC Hybrid gave me exactly what I needed. It let me tailor a traineeship around my life, rather than having to tailor my life around qualifying as a solicitor. I got to know some of the other Hybrid students during the monthly tutorial weekends, when we all gathered together, and found I hadn't been unique in this. Many of us had been avoiding the next step in becoming a solicitor due to simply being unable or unwilling to move to Dublin. I was surprised, though, at the number of people

who live and work in Dublin but for one reason or another, were never able to commit to the traditional PPC programme. The diversity in the room during the tutorial weekends has been a clear sign the Hybrid course tapped into an entirely new cohort of prospective lawyers.

That's not to say it's been easy. The phone pings nightly with trainees who are exhausted, trying to get in another lecture or tutorial after a solid day working at home, while looking after kids, while simply managing during this crisis. But still, we've gotten each other through. So far, at least. Rory O'Boyle and the rest of the Law School staff and faculty can't be credited enough for making sure we've kept largely on track (in a year when literally everything else in the world was derailed).

A new status quo

Covid-19 has forced everyone to rethink their priorities. People and businesses have all had long-established routines and norms stripped away. For the legal profession, I think this is a great opportunity to build a new status quo. We've all had to find new, non-traditional ways of working, studying and even networking. Surprisingly, it's working pretty well. I see this as the first step to a much more diverse and interesting profession, even more full of non-traditional lawyers, experimenting with unconventional legal careers and working in unconventional ways. As a participant in the first Hybrid course, I've really loved witnessing first-hand signs of what's to come for this profession.

THE BIG PICTURE

Our inaugural PPC Photography Competition 2020 encouraged trainees to take inspiration from their surroundings and celebrate the diversity of their experience while training remotely.

The winning photograph was taken by Glen Byrne

The runner-up Red Admiral photograph was taken by Kerry Ann Corbett

Joint winners of our social media photo check-in were Lynda Cosgrave and Sarah McNulty



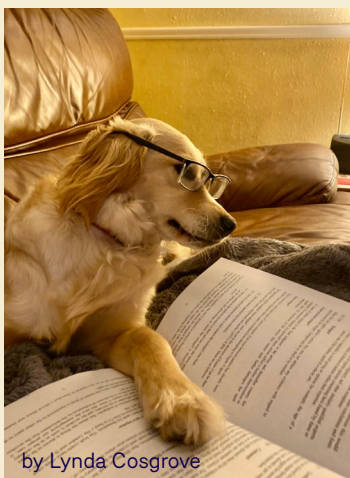
Winner: by Glen Byrne



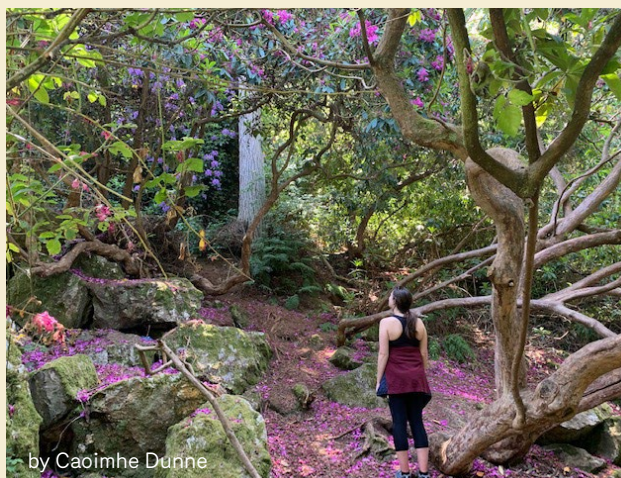
Runner-Up: By Kerry Ann Corbett



by Sarah McNulty



by Lynda Cosgrove



by Caoimhe Dunne



by Claudine O'Driscoll



Loughdan by Aisling Casey



Duckling by Aisling Casey

SHRINK ME: PSYCHOLOGY OF A LAWYER EXPANDS AND MOVES ONLINE

Antoinette Moriarty leads the Psychological Services team at the Law School and tells us about their response to Covid-19.

Shrink Me: Psychology of a Lawyer adapted to deliver an expanded online programme which kicked off in April 2020. We were thrilled when 84% of the PPC II cohort attended that first live online session. Participation and interaction levels remaining high throughout the course.

The new online offering comprised two distinct pillars, *Unlocking Wellbeing Together* and *Legal Lives*. The weekly online sessions provided a positive platform for trainees to unlock their wellbeing through shared thoughts, ideas and engagement with the Law School community.

Unlocking Wellbeing Together

An exciting line-up of wellbeing and mental health professionals offered insights on how to cope with social distancing and self-isolation as a reality of COVID-19.

In an unforgettable talk, human rights lawyer **Simone George** spoke about the tension between acceptance and hope when faced with life's toughest challenges and the ground-breaking work being undertaken with her partner, Mark Pollack, in trying to fast-track a cure for paralysis.

Wim Hof practitioner, **Níall Ó Murchu** explored the powerful effect breathing has on our physiology paired with a Wim Hof breathing method master class.

Psychotherapists **Trish Howard** and **Lauren Gourley** shared ideas to help parents juggling being at home with their children with maintaining demanding jobs.

LegalED Talks

In collaboration with Law Society Finuas Skillnet the team went on to launch a new series of free LegalED Talks which were available online to both trainees and solicitors.

Providing rare access to well-known individuals within the international and Irish legal communities these talks focused on

opportunities as well as the challenges posed to lawyers and law firms during this crisis.

Irish Times columnist **Fintan O'Toole** spoke to international lawyer and author **Prof. Philippe Sands, QC** about his life as a lawyer as well as his ground-breaking books *East West Street* and *The Ratline*. Senior Herbert Smith Freehills Partner **Chris Parsons** joined us to speak about his life and career, and how he successfully overcame challenges to his mental health.

Award-winning journalist **Dearbhail McDonald's** conversation with Court of Appeal Judge **Donald Binchy** and former Court of Appeal Judge **Michael Peart** presented a timely response to the transformation in court service to help public court services cope with coronavirus.

While **Noeline Blackwell**, human rights lawyer and CEO of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, and **Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop**, Acting CEO at Saoirse Women's Refuge, discussed the limitations of a legal response to domestic violence with **Sarah Benson**, CEO at Women's Aid.

LIFE ZOOMS BY



Anne Burke launches online induction for PPC II



Dr Gabriel Brennan launches online Commercial and Complex Property Transactions



Rory O'Boyle launches online tutorials for PPC Hybrid



Antoinette Moriarty launches Online Shrink Me: Psychology of a Lawyer Programme



Fintan O'Toole speaks to Prof. Philippe Sands QC as part of legal lives series



UCC Director of Creative Writing Dr Eibhear Walsh launches the Law Schools virtual Book Club.



Shrink me in conversation with Human Rights Lawyer Simone George

TRAINEES GAIN 21st CENTURY LEGAL SKILLS

During PPC II trainees were provided with an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills in a specialist area of practice in which the legal profession increasing operates, and in turn diversify their career opportunities.

Commercial Mediation Practice and Skills

Through collaboration with the Mediator Academy the Law School delivered a new online programme for PPC II trainee solicitors in Commercial Mediation Practice and Skills.

The programme, which was independently accredited by the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CI Arb), featured experienced mediation practitioners and international experts, guiding the trainees through the mediation process via a dynamic online platform of interactive lessons and practical scenario-based skills simulations.

Mediation is one of the fastest growing dispute resolution methods globally. The Mediation Act

2017 imposed a number of new obligations on solicitors, and with the outcomes of the Singapore Convention on Mediation, the role of mediation in resolving disputes will be further enhanced.

On successful completion, trainees could opt to join the CI Arb at Associate level.

Technology Law

The Diploma Centre offered a free Certificate in Technology Law to PPC II trainee solicitors.

The certificate focused on an increasingly important sector for solicitors and businesses in Ireland. The course ran over five weeks, with online lectures released weekly supported by live interactive Q&A sessions.

Ireland has a booming tech market and has become the digital hub for Europe. As such, it is of vital importance that all organisations understand the law relating to technology and that all legal advisers have the requisite knowledge to advise on these matters. The course explored the latest trends in technology and provided a wide-ranging analysis of issues relating to technology law, social media, and data protection.

On successful completion, trainees were awarded a Certificate in Technology Law.



Congratulations to Trainee Solicitor Aaron Sweeney on his fundraising of over €8,500.00. On the 8th of August, Aaron completed the Connemara100, a 160km road race, in aid of Jigsaw, The National Centre for Youth Mental Health.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS AND ENGAGING IN COUNSELLING AS NORMATIVE WITHIN PPC COHORTS

The Law School's free counselling service to trainee solicitors has grown rapidly in recent years and due to demand the team has expanded to now include ten counsellors.

The service exists to equip trainee solicitors with the necessary resilience to address the complexity and demands of legal training and practice. By prioritising self-care early in their career, trainees are empowered to prioritise mental health throughout their lifetime. A distinguishing feature of the service is that trainees need not be in crisis to avail of counselling. In fact, all trainees are actively encouraged to engage in counselling services to enhance their personal wellbeing.

In the spring of 2020, the Law School quickly responded to an unknown reality as Ireland entered lockdown and the entire PPC II was delivered in an online format. Almost overnight, the Psychological Services team poised itself to support trainees in an exclusively online capacity via zoom.

The team went on to provided services to over 100 trainees and for the first time ever, witnessed a participation rate of almost 40% amongst male clients growing from 29.6% in 2019. Due to the agility and efficiency of the service, the team achieved an almost 100% attendance rate for scheduled sessions. Trainees were especially appreciative of therapeutic support at a much needed time with 96% of those completing the service scoring it as 8 or above out of 10.



"This service is amazing and definitely well needed for trainees! It has been the highlight of both PPC I and PPC II for me, as I feel I have taken life-long value from it."

Trainee Solicitor PPC II 2020

ONLINE SCHOOLS IN FOR SUMMER!

1500 transition and fifth year students across Ireland took part in our brand-new Legal Ambitions Summer School this July. At such a challenging time for students and parents, the Summer School provided four weeks of free, highly-engaging, online legal education.



Ken Murphy welcomes 1500 students to the inaugural Legal Ambitions Summer School.

Vision of law

16-year-old Emma Kelly tells us how the Summer School broadened her vision of law both as a career and in her daily life. "I have always been interested in law as my mum works in law. Legal Ambitions gave me the opportunity to hear from experienced solicitors and learn about career areas that are available after studying law in college. I would definitely consider studying law because of what I learned at the Summer School.

User-friendly and innovative

Emma's mother, Sinead Kelly, adds that Legal Ambitions gave her daughter an invaluable insight into the legal landscape in Ireland.

"As a solicitor myself, it was so encouraging to see how she was beginning to grasp some legal concepts and we had some interesting conversations about various concepts such as mens rea and actus reus – the 'guilty mind' and 'guilty act' elements of criminal law,"

"This is a great initiative by the Law Society to encourage young people who have legal ambitions to explore some aspects of the profession in more depth. The modules were very easy to navigate and the whole summer school was very user-friendly and innovative."

Exceptional demand

Due to exceptional demand for places on the 2020 Summer School, we plan to run the programme again in 2021.



FIRST-EVER VIRTUAL OPEN EVENING

In July 2020 the Diploma Centre held its first virtual open evening. Over 50 participants joined this online information event for the Society's Diploma in Law, a course which provides non-legal graduates with a grounding in the eight core law subjects.

Participants engaged with Diploma in Law lecturers and graduates. Graduate Kate Mulholland (Trainee Solicitor, Hayes Solicitors) shared her experience of the Diploma in Law and her route to becoming a trainee while McGreal, (Garda Sergeant, An Garda Síochána) spoke about his positive experience of the course.

The 2020 Diploma in Law programme launched on 4 September with applications now open for the 2021 programme. For more information visit: www.lawsociety.ie/diplomacentre



CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Antoinette Moriarty on being selected as OUTLaW Network's LGBT+ Champion of the Year for 2020. This was awarded in recognition for her brilliant work to support and empower trainee solicitors from all walks of life.

KEEP UP WITH OUR LATEST NEWS

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- The Law School Professional Training
- Diploma Centre



Articles for inclusion in the next edition should be sent to: Rebecca Raftery, Editor, The Law School News, Blackhall Place, Dublin 7.

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