

## Notes on Inner Temple Careers Day - June 2012

### Background

The Inns of Court are keen to open up the profession and ensure that those who are determined with the right qualities can access the Bar even if they do not have contacts. 30% of those gaining pupillage did the GDL and do well in their careers. Students need to show an absolute determination to succeed at the Bar; have a 2:1 or above degree and mini pupillages. Those with a 2:2 are only likely to succeed if there were mitigating circumstances or they have had a previous career.

The aptitude test is likely to come in for students applying for the BPTC to start in 2013. There are sample questions available and students should look at the LSAT test <http://www.testpreppractice.net/LSAT/Free-Online-LSAT-Practice-Tests.aspx> as some of the questions are very similar. The test will be pass or fail and it is out for consultation whether or not the number of resits should be limited. Students will have to pass it before they can enrol on the BPTC.

There are pros and cons to joining an inn early – on the one hand there are student associations which can help with networking etc. On the other hand if you join an inn and are unsuccessful in obtaining a scholarship you can't then apply to another inn for a scholarship. Students have to join an inn by 31 May before they start their BPTC.

15000 barristers practising

12500 self employed – half in London and half regional

The rest are employed e.g. CPS, local authorities, GLS, in house

Outside London the biggest sets are St John's in Manchester and No 5 and St Philips in Birmingham.

The profession is rapidly modernising with barristers having more direct access, the ability to hold client's money etc. The publicly funded work is struggling as legal aid funding is cut but family and criminal barristers can still gross £70k p.a.

The number of pupillages has fallen since minimum salaries were introduced and particularly in areas such as family and crime. However, the Bar is starting to use more paralegals who will often have done the BPTC.

### Applying for Scholarships

The cost of the BPTC is now between £10k and £17K. At Inner Temple applicants have a one in three chance of getting a scholarship and of those who do over 90% obtain pupillage. Both Inner and Middle Temple interview all applicants whereas Grays Inn and Lincoln's Inn shortlist first.

In terms of qualities sought at the scholarship interviews these include:

Intellectual qualities (ability to analyse complex information and identify essentials, judgment, perceptiveness, good memory, academic achievement).

Motivation (very high level of drive and determination, commitment to appropriate aspects of work at the Bar of England and Wales)

Relationships (ability to get on with a wide range of people, diplomacy, ability to sustain relationships)

Character (calmness under fire, ability to work hard for long hours and against deadlines, sound personal values and integrity)

Impact (articulacy, persuasiveness, confidence, ability to suit conduct to the situation)

In 09/10 1432 completed the BPTC 460 pupillages 467 obtained tenancy

12.5 applications on average for each pupillage.

Students should have completed between 3 and 5 minis in a mixture of chambers before applying for the scholarship. Own experiences and interests are crucial and should be talked about in terms of how they apply to the Bar.

Some chambers are more interested in you doing voluntary work that really makes a difference rather than mini pupillages.

There are 2 sorts of awards – the main ones tend to go to students with a high 2:1 or 1<sup>st</sup> and the exhibitions go to those with perhaps lower academics but mitigating circumstances. Students should put all their mini pupillages on the application form as this shows their commitment to the Bar. This can also include ones that are lined up. Activities such as mooting, working in advice centres, FRU, death row etc look really good as do interests pursued to a high level. If students have mitigating circumstances or caring responsibilities for example they should definitely mention these.

An hour before the interview the applicant will be given a case to read. This will be discussed in the 20 minute interview in terms of what it's about, the legal arguments and the decisions made. It's important in the interview not to say you want to be a barrister just because you like advocacy as this doesn't work now that there are solicitor advocates. It's very important not to inflate your grades as this would compromise your integrity.

## **Individual talks**

### **9 Stone Buildings**

Recommended that students should work in law centres, the CAB or charities to show their commitment. Do a lot of chancery work – insolvency and property. Intellectually very interesting and challenging. Less court work than a criminal barrister. As a self-employed barrister you have to arrange your pension, healthcare and insurance yourself.

### **Ministry of Justice**

Barristers advise on litigation on human rights grounds. Very high profile work early on in career. Assist ministers on new legislation and write their speeches. Good work life balance. Advice to students – take your time – gap years can be a good thing.

## **2 Hare Court**

Work: crime, fraud, regulatory – prosecution and defence.

The speaker worked as a paralegal in a law firm after doing a law degree and became a practice manager. He then moved to a set of chambers to help them with recruitment and became involved in their business development work. He sees this as very hands on meetings lots of clients whereas in law firms he thinks this role is more back office. He commented on the fact that very few students go straight onto pupillage so they need to look for interesting things to do such as gap years, performance, sport etc.

Written by Anna Preston June 12