



AW London Newsletter

Association of Women Solicitors London Newsletter



DIARY DATES

*See page 11 for all of our
upcoming events*

March 2018

Issue 11

ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS

Upcoming Events – Save the Dates

Tuesday 17th April

Law Reporting and Open Justice in a Digital World

Monday 21st May

London Legal Walk

Tuesday 5th June

Reception and Networking at the House of Lords

Thursday 21st June

La Traviata Opera

*For details and booking please visit
www.awslondon.co.uk*

Let's stay in touch...

The new data protection regulations come into effect on 25 May 2018. After this we will only be able to contact you with details of our forthcoming events and send you our newsletter if you actively opt-in to receive this contact.

We will shortly be writing to you to ask you to opt-in to receive this information. If you do not give us permission to keep in touch in this way, or if you do not respond to our opt-in request, you will not continue to hear about AWS London and will miss out on all the exciting things lined up!

Please do not forget to say yes to AWS London.

How to contact us

Linda Davies, our administrator, who is also a Committee member, will forward your messages to the Committee if you contact her on AWSLondon1@gmail.com

Don't forget that you can also keep up with our activities by joining our [LinkedIn](#) group, or by following us on [Twitter](#)



Welcome from the Chair

Welcome!

A weekly media theme is women speaking out about the workplace challenges we still face nearly one hundred years after being first able to practise in the professions. Coupled with the recent centenary of women (albeit a restricted group) being granted the vote, now is a good opportunity to reflect on our modern day working lives.

As your new Chair I was delighted to welcome bestselling novelist Joanna Trollope to our Annual Dinner. Joanna encouraged us to really start the conversation about women in today's workplace. Joanna's talk focused on her novel, *City of Friends* (reviewed in our July 2017 Newsletter), the four lead female characters being successful City career women juggling work and family life.

AWSL are keen to support women at all stages of their legal careers. Joined by our new team of officers I am looking forward to carrying on AWSL's work of promoting opportunities, equality and inclusion for women in law. A heartfelt thank you to Angela, for sailing us through our 25th celebrations gaining a higher profile for AWSL. Angela will continue as our media spokesperson, so our voice is heard on our workplace challenges.

Please support our role model project and nominate your role model. Having successfully supported Janet Legrand in her QC (Hon) application we were very pleased Janet was able to join us at our Annual Dinner and to also welcome Baroness Ruth Henig. Visible role models help encourage resilience in the workplace. We will all have the opportunity to meet Baroness Henig and other working peers at our House of Lords Reception on 5 June.

Do come along to our events (to book visit our website awslondon.co.uk) and encourage others to join so we can continue our work supporting women in law for another 25 years at least!

Looking forward to meeting you soon.

Best,

Gillian



AWSL Chair, Gillian



Meet the Officers of AWS London



Amy Wedgwood

Vice-Chair

Amy joined the AWS Committee in 2015 as a trainee solicitor before qualifying into the Injury and Medical Claims department. Before commencing her training contract with Anthony Gold Solicitors, she worked as Court of Protection paralegal whilst finishing her Masters in Human Rights at Queen Mary University London. She has also worked with a human rights NGO taking cases to the European Court of Human Rights. In her spare time Amy is involved with a local drama society and enjoys playing netball and cooking. A little-known fact about Amy is that she once appeared in a Spanish chewing gum advert and the television series Doctors.

Hannah first joined the AWS Committee in 2015 as an LPC student before leaving to live in Dubai for 18 months. Whilst in Dubai, Hannah secured a paralegal position with international family law specialists, Expatriate Law, before being offered a training contract in early 2016. Now back with her feet firmly on UK soil, Hannah is due to qualify as a Solicitor in October 2018 and plans to continue specialising in family law.

In her spare time, Hannah is mainly “owned” by her dog, and enjoys spending her weekends walking him somewhere in the countryside.

A little-known fact about Hannah – she is a Black Stripe belt in Tae Kwon Do and was an Assistant Instructor before injury resulted in her having to hang up her gloves!



Hannah McCrindle

Treasurer

Kavita currently works as a Paralegal Manager and is Head of the Legal Department for Tour operator, Red Sea Holidays. She handles over 200 litigated and non-litigated holiday sickness and Personal injury claims. She has also attended ABTA meetings on behalf of Red Sea Holidays for the personal injury claims group discussing the increase in holiday sickness claims. Kavita joined the AWS Committee in February 2015. She is passionate about campaigning for women’s rights and admires the sense of community that AWS provides for women in the legal profession.

An interesting fact about Kavita is that she volunteered as a Games Maker at the London 2012 Olympics as an Event Services team member at the Riverbank Arena in Stratford Park. She also enjoys attending her Bikram Yoga classes when she’s not in the office!



Kavita Bhupal

Secretary

A former Senior Policy Advisor and Specialist Prosecutor at CPS International Division, Eunice also worked for a year as a Seconded National Expert at Eurojust in the Hague. She is a qualified solicitor in England and Wales, a Member of the Ghana Bar and a Member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. As well as being an Executive Committee Member of the AWS, Eunice is also a member of the Access to Justice Committee of the Law Society. A little-known fact about Eunice is that she is passionate about nurturing talent and is currently a Mentor with the Cherie Blair Foundation and a hands-on Director of the Golden Age International School in Ghana.



Eunice Shang-Simpson

Editor-in-Chief

AGM and Annual Dinner

With guest speaker Joanna Trollope



We had so much positive feedback after the AGM last year that we decided to return to the Oxford and Cambridge Club who really did us proud. The evening commenced with a drinks reception so that everyone could relax and enjoy a glass or two of prosecco after a hard day's work and of course catch up with friends. This was followed by the AGM.

After the Secretary and Treasurer's reports had been given we then moved on to tell the assembled members that the Committee had decided to make 2 more Honorary Members. We have only ever made 4 Honorary Members in the last twenty-five years and we were so pleased that honorary members Madeleine Heggs and Elizabeth Cruickshank were able to join us for the evening. Linda Davies, who has been on the committee herself for about fifteen years, introduced this item to the AGM. The new Honorary Members are Alison Parkinson and Jenny Staples. Alison was the first Chair and Jenny was the first Treasurer. Linda recounted that Alison had told her that initially they had no idea whether the Association would be successful. Twenty-five years ago was a different time. Emails had been invented but were not the routine way of communicating with people. Back then Alison used to stuff fliers into envelopes by hand. Well we know that the Association is a resounding success and indeed the AGM marked the end of our 25th anniversary year. Both Alison and Jenny had resigned from the Committee some years ago but had remained loyal and supportive by regularly attending events. Sadly, neither Alison nor Jenny could be with us for the AGM having prior commitments. The Committee proposed that it was entirely fitting and appropriate to make them both Honorary Members and the Members agreed.

Outgoing Chair, Angela Hogan, addressed the AGM about what we had achieved in the last year. We then went on to appoint the officers for the year ahead being Chair Gillian Fielden, Vice-Chair Amy Wedgwood, Secretary Kavita Bhupal, and Treasurer Hannah McCrindle. A new officer's role was created, that of Editor-in-Chief of the Newsletter and the first holder of this post is Eunice Shang-Simpson. The new Committee was also voted in. There then followed a short address by Gillian as the new Chair about the year ahead for the Association promoting opportunity, equality and inclusion for women in law.

After the AGM had concluded members and guests enjoyed a delicious three course dinner followed by an interactive after dinner talk by novelist Joanna Trollope, who is a distant descendent of Anthony Trollope. Joanna is very interested in the world of work particularly insofar as it affects women and this is a common theme in her novels. Joanna talked about what options faced her and her contemporaries when she was a young woman. She recounted that she and a friend were told they could only follow one of two career choices. As they did not fancy either of these her friend had said to her "Well we'll have to get married then". In contrast her daughters expect to have to work and have careers. Joanna invited contributions from the audience on this theme and a number of members related their experiences. We think Joanna's next book may well feature a woman solicitor!

To round off the evening we held a raffle to raise some much-needed funds for Dress for Success which is a charity that Joanna herself supports. The organisation helps women who have been out of work and who are looking to getting back into the job market. They help with finding them suitable smart clothes to wear for interviews and they also provide interview training. Several prizes were won and we give thanks in particular to Sadler's Wells for donating show tickets and Pan Macmillan for donating a copy of Joanna's most recent novel – *An Unsuitable Match* - which Joanna was very pleased to sign for many keen readers on the night. The raffle raised nearly £250. Further monies were also raised from the sale of Joanna's books.

By Linda Davies
AWS London Administrator

Largest ever survey on gender equality in legal profession

Released by the Law Society of England and Wales

The largest international survey of women in the law has been released by the Law Society of England and Wales, shedding light on the road to gender equality in the legal profession.

“People working in law across the world have spoken out about the challenges the profession faces in achieving gender equality,” said Law Society vice president Christina Blacklaws.

“I am a passionate believer in equality. Where there is inequality, I will not flinch from tackling it. I know I’m not alone in this - justice, fairness and the rule of law are what drew most of us to the legal profession.”

“Unconscious bias in the legal profession was the most commonly identified barrier to career progression for women, while flexible working was seen as a remedy by an overwhelming 91% of respondents to our survey.”

“Interestingly while half of all respondents said they thought there had been progress on gender equality over the last five years there was a significant difference in perception by gender with 74% of men reporting progress in gender equality compared to only 48% of women.”

Key figures:

- 7,781 people responded to the Law Society’s Women in the Law survey (5,758 women, 554 men and 1,469 unknown or other)
- 74% of men and 48% of women reported progress on gender equality in the last 5 years (overall 50%)
- Main barriers to career progression perceived as:
 - Unconscious bias (52%)
 - However, only 11% said unconscious bias training is consistently carried out in their organisation
 - Unacceptable work/life balance demanded to reach senior levels (49%)
 - Traditional networks/routes to promotion are male orientated (46%)
 - Current resistance to flexible working practices (41%)
- 91% of respondents said flexible working is critical to improving diversity
 - 52% work in an organisation where flexible working is in place
- 60% are aware of gender pay gap in their place of work
 - Only 16% see visible steps taken to address gender pay gap

Christina Blacklaws concluded: “With our women in leadership programme, the Law Society is committed to giving women and men in law the tools to make positive changes towards gender equality.”

“Every law firm, lawyer and client will benefit from greater equality in our places of work. I believe the justice system will also be stronger if the legal professions better reflects the values we uphold.”



The Law Society

Women in the Law 2018

The largest international survey conducted on the topic of women in the law

As part of our continued work to **improve gender equality in the legal profession**, the Law Society conducted a survey between November 2017 and January 2018 to better understand key issues that affect women working in law. This follows our 2012 survey from which we draw comparisons, improvements and areas of concern.



7,781

responses were collected

(5,758 women, 554 men, 20 other, and 1,449 unknown).

Almost 5% of the respondents identified as LGBT+, 13% identified as BAME and 4% identified as disabled.

We've made some progress over the last five years, but **perception is skewed**

Half of respondents said they thought there had been progress on gender equality over the last five years but there was a **large difference in perception by gender** with 74% of men reporting progress in gender equality compared to 48% of women.



Unconscious bias was perceived to be the main barrier to career progression in 2018

Respondents have become more aware of the role unconscious bias plays in **preventing many women from reaching senior positions within the legal profession.**

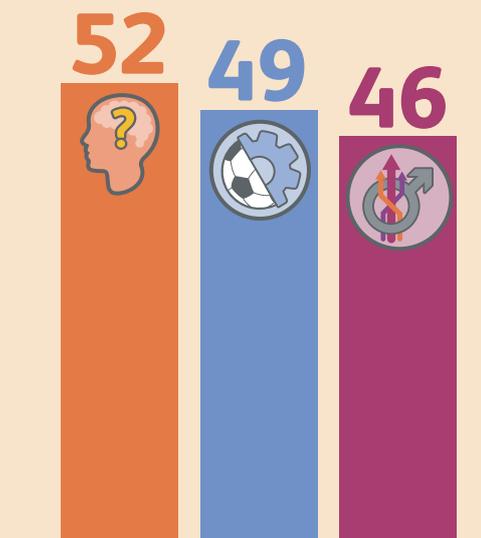
(Up from third reason cited in 2012)

This is also reflected in the scoring of the **least consistently enforced policies in the workplace:**

Only 11% reported **unconscious bias training** being consistently carried out in their organisation

11%

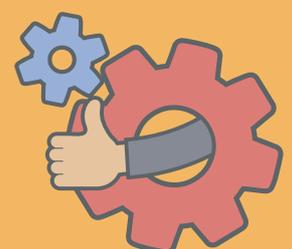
Top reasons reported



- Unconscious bias (52%)
- Unacceptable work/life balance demanded to reach senior levels (49%)
- Traditional networks/routes to promotion are male orientated (46%)

On a more positive note

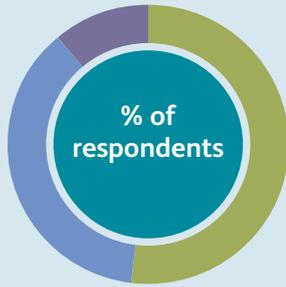
41% felt that they benefit from **regular performance and development reviews**; and **43%** reported having **diversity and inclusion training consistently enforced**



More people than ever think **flexible working really works for everyone**

91%

of respondents felt that a **flexible working culture is critical to improving diversity** in the legal profession (86% in 2012)



- 52%** of respondents work in organisations where a **flexible working policy is consistently enforced**
- 37%** work in organisations where there's **provision**, but not consistently enforced
- 11%** work in organisations with **no provision** for flexible working

Both men and women share this opinion (88% and 93% in favour respectively)



Given the introduction of the new **Gender Pay Gap** reporting requirements, the 2017/18 survey also contained specific questions on this topic:



60%

of the 6,533 individuals responding to this section of the survey reported they were **aware of gender pay gap within their organisation**

Worryingly, of these **only 16%** reported **visible steps being taken** to address the gender pay gap within their organisation.



What works: best practice highlighted by the survey

Some of the initiatives respondents said have worked in supporting women in the legal profession



Access to and mainstreaming of flexible working, for women and men and at all grades



Networking opportunities at a local, city or regional level or through national networks

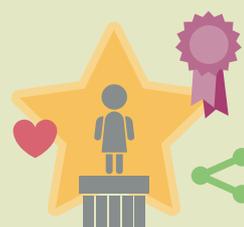
Mentoring and sponsorship including from senior staff, peers and reverse mentoring



Engaging men in the equality debate, to raise awareness of the issues, and to encourage shared parental leave and flexible working to enable men to participate more in family life



Promotion and celebration / increased visibility of leading women in law: in the judiciary, in executive office, in firms and organisations



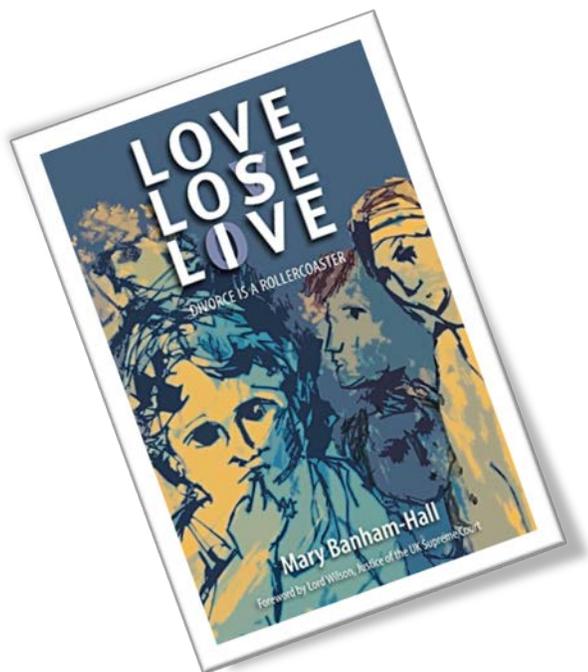
Role modelling family friendly working practices, including through speaking at informal and formal events

If you are interested in getting involved in the next stages of this project, including hosting roundtables to generate in depth insights, or simply want to know more about it, please contact Alex Storer, Diversity & Inclusion Adviser: alex.storer@lawsociety.org.uk

www.lawsociety.org.uk

Book Review: Love Lose Live – Divorce is a Rollercoaster

By Mary Banham-Hall



As former private client practitioner my original interest in this novel was as an account of a fictional family break up and how mediation compares with going to Court. That is the marketing line for the publication and the angle taken by other reviewers.

The book is supported by a Foreword from Lord Nicholas Wilson, now Justice of the UK Supreme Court, but formerly at the Bar specialising in family law.

But the storyline doubles as both a messy Divorce and a very accurate account of the issues faced by the wife, solicitor Beth Bailey returning to work after several years out and now a single Mum of three.

The author Mary Banham-Hall was qualified as a solicitor in 1979 and since 1984 has practised family law at Heald solicitors in Milton Keynes. The novel however is set in Norwich and London.

The plot is well researched and highlights very well the issues faced in modern provincial High St practice as well as offering a nostalgic look back to how it used to be. The partners (all men of course) debate whether Beth will have lost her competence during her years out but decide to take her back as “part time is cheaper”.

There is some poetic licence. The old national Association of Women Solicitors Returner Course is still being held in Cambridge for example, and professional/social boundaries are blurred (silly Beth!) but the 2018 debate on the difficulties establishing grounds for Divorce is included.

The book is not all about family law - the heroine Beth herself specialises in commercial property so a side line plot concerns a planning law dispute. It is also an excellent novel without any of the legal bits. The main characters for example both adults and children are so well drawn that very early on I felt as if I had met them. Having read this unputdownable book almost all in one go I highly recommend it.

By *Christl Hughes*
AWS London Committee Member



AWS London Role Models

There are so many excellent role models in our profession and we want to increase the visibility of women lawyers. So, we welcome members sending us details of someone who has perhaps inspired them from afar or helped them through a particular case or given encouraging advice. Feel free to send suggestions to awslondon1@gmail.com

Dr Rukia Baruti

Founder, Africa International Legal Awareness



Tanzanian-born Dr. Rukia Baruti is a qualified solicitor in England & Wales with legal practicing experience in litigation and international arbitration. She specialises in international investment law. She has been appointed as arbitrator, including as sole arbitrator, in international arbitrations.

Rukia is the founder of [Africa International Legal Awareness](#) (AILA), which she currently manages. AILA is a not-for-profit organisation that works to enhance professional legal competence and promote recognition of international law expertise among African practitioners. AILA's flagship training programme is international investment law and arbitration.

Prior to founding AILA, Rukia practiced law at SJ Berwin's International Arbitration Group in London. She is a former Vice-President of the London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA) Africa Users' Council. She benefits from experience in the roles of Counsel, Arbitrator and Secretary to the Tribunal in arbitrations conducted under various arbitration rules including ICC, UNCITRAL, ICSID, SCC and the LCIA Rules. She also has a well-rounded knowledge of Public International Law and International Relations gained from her postgraduate studies. Rukia was listed in The Lawyer 'Hot 100' in recognition of her pro-bono work with International Lawyers for Africa, an initiative to train African lawyers.

Fiona Fitzgerald

Chief Executive of Radcliffe Chambers

Fiona is chief executive of Radcliffe Chambers a traditional chancery commercial set based in Lincoln's Inn. She joined Chambers in June 2014 and since then Chambers has grown by 60% and been named Chambers of the year by STEP, Halsbury's Awards and British Legal Week. 2016 was a busy year for Radcliffe Chambers in that they were also awarded Chambers of the Year in the Halsbury's Awards and British Legal Week Awards and shortlisted for many more including The Lawyer. Fiona is a member of the executive board of the LPMA which is a group of senior directors working within chambers. Previously an equity partner in a busy national practice, her role was a full-time management one. She was also chair of the Association of Women Solicitors which at the time had a membership of 18,000 solicitors. She has been a regular commentator and writer in the media on a wide range of issues from management and strategy to compliance and career development particularly for women in the profession.



The SRA and LGBT Mentoring Scheme

The SRA want to help small and medium-sized law firms develop their approach to lesbian, gay, bi and trans (LGBT) diversity and access the business benefits that come with being a more inclusive employer. Alongside Stonewall, we have linked up with ten firms to offer other firms 2 hours' **free** support and guidance every month.

They want to recruit up to 25 firms, from across England and Wales, to take part in a pilot and be mentored for an initial 6-12 month period. By developing their approach, firms involved in the scheme will be supported in attracting the best staff, as well as other business benefits such as increased networking opportunities. The mentors, all of who are top performing law firms in the [Stonewall Workplace Equality Index](#), will provide participating firms with an average of two hours' free support and guidance every month. These firms are:

- Baker McKenzie
- Berwin Leighton Paisner
- Clifford Chance
- CMS
- Dentons
- DWF
- Herbert Smith Freehills
- Hogan Lovells
- Norton Rose Fulbright
- Pinsent Masons



If you are interested in signing up to this scheme, please go to the SRA website and fill in the [expression of interest form](#). This is an incredible opportunity for a law firm to gain knowledge and experience on LGBT issues and establish important business connections.

You can find out more information here www.sra.org.uk/lgbt.

The Law Society Early Advice Campaign

The Law Society is campaigning for legal aid to be re-introduced for early legal advice, particularly in family and housing law.

Everyone knows that if you catch a problem early, you're more likely to stop it getting worse. The same is true for legal problems - most of the time, these are easier, and cheaper, to address early on.

Unfortunately, most areas of free or subsidised early legal advice were stopped by the government in 2012. This has meant that people who can't afford to pay for early legal advice are now left to address their problems alone – meaning that simple problems can get worse, and can create other unnecessary costs for the taxpayer.

Support the Law Society's campaign by writing to your local MP, using this online template (<https://lawsociety.e-activist.com/page/19039/action/1>) – it only takes a couple of minutes, and every letter helps.

Read more about the Law Society's campaign <http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/policy-campaigns/campaigns/early-advice/>

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Editor:

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Publisher:

Hannah McCrindle

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday 17th April 2018

Law Reporting and Open Justice in a Digital World

– Presentation by Paul Magrath, Head of Product Development and Online Content at the Incorporated Council of Law Reporting for England and Wales (ICLR).



Monday 21st May 2018

London Legal Walk - Join us once more to help us raise money for free legal advice charities to help them keep up the wonderful work that they do.

Tuesday 5th June 2018

Reception and Networking at the House of Lords

- Talk by Baroness Henig.

Thursday 21st June 2018

La Traviata Opera - Join us for our annual opera outing in Holland Park.

Remember.... AWS London members obtain discounts for most events plus priority booking for our special events such as the opera in the summer and the ballet in January. If you would like to join, download and complete the application form at www.awslondon.co.uk or contact Linda Davies by email at AWSLondon1@gmail.com

Further details of all our events www.awslondon.co.uk



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Essential for Success

