



Welcome to this issue of the AWS London newsletter from our current AWSL Chair, Virginia Cannon.



Hello again to all our Members, I hope this finds you safe and well.

It is a cliché, but it has been quite a Covid 19 roller-coaster since last time I wrote to you in June. Actually, no, on thinking about it, more of a Hokey Cokey: in, out, and shake it all about.

We have had this rhythm on an irregular basis on what is in and out with WFH, social mixing, travel at home and abroad, gyms, pubs, clubs, cafes and restaurants, museums, art galleries, theatres, cinemas, concert halls, opera theatres, schools and universities – virtually every part of our working and leisure lives, with changes to what we can and cannot do happening on an almost daily basis.

Now, we are in Lockdown 2, still uncertain what will happen on 2nd December, if/when vaccines will become available, what the various cocktails will be and how effective, and who will get them where and when ... If there is one stable element in all of this, it is that 'constant change is here to stay', in the words of the 1962 song.

The knock-on effects from Covid 19 have been grim for many. However, they have also catalysed inspirational ingenuity, determination and inventiveness in people's resolve to somehow carry on, even if making a new start is the only option.

They have caused a spotlight to shine on the problems of many women WFH with families to look after, and a positive change in society's attitude to mental health issues, which have affected almost everyone, in one way or another. Committee member Nicola Wainwright and I have written about our experiences for this issue.

They have also caused a sea-change in the way lawyers, among others, perceive technology and AI, with law firms increasingly putting both at the heart of their future development, with plus and minus ramifications still in process of unfolding.

And they have led to increasing pressure for reform in the areas of legal aid and courtroom availability. The plans for a new Justice Quarter proposed by the City of London signal confidence in the global role of the City, and London in general, in justice and legal services at all levels, including Crown, Magistrate and County Courts.



Then in the midst of the Covid 19 issues, appalling events happened in the US which led to the rise in prominence of the BLM movement, and the tsunami that is rolling out from that, which has at last brought the issue of diversity to the forefront in many areas of life, including the legal world. Committee members Suleikha Ali and Emma Kendell have written a piece about the treatment of Barrister, Alexandra Wilson, in this context.

So, there are signs that the 'shake it all about' phase of the Hokey Cokey is having some positive effects. However, we seem to be at the point right now where, although we know that in the long term the situation will probably improve, it is difficult to see when and how right now, not to mention that it may get worse first.

So, how can AWSL help you get through to the point where we all see the light at the end of the tunnel?

The Committee are aware that many of you may feel rather Zoomed-out with business and personal meetings, so we are being selective in choosing events which we hope will appeal to you in spite of that. We would like to hear from you on what you want - see below.

By the time this Newsletter goes out, we will have had our second Murder Mystery evening, on 21st October put on by Paly Dead London with thanks to Amy, our previous Chair. I've written a review of the first murder mystery, which was a great fun evening.

Lockdown 2 put an end to our plans for a Nutcracker event which we e-mailed you about, but current plans include :-

- A remote event on **Tuesday 15th December** to replace our annual, very popular Christmas Quiz: Zoom Bingo with a Quiz element – look out for our email on this;
- A panel event around lawyers who have transferred professions: Solicitor to Barrister, and vice versa, why they did it, how they achieved it, and was it worth it;
- A webinar about key skills, techniques and best practice for online advocacy

The last two events to take place early in 2021.

We are aware we have made assumptions about what you want, and we really do need you to tell us if we are on the right track. Do you want:

- More training and development events if so on what topics? A Zoom seminar on Mediation? Or on other legal topics?
- Or more social events, e.g. Zoom drinks parties where you can meet fellow members? A Zoom networking event, where you have 10 minutes with each other participant, before you move on? An event where you swap Covid 19 problems and solutions with other members?
- Or a Zoom event where you focus on BAME and diversity issues?
- Or none of the above, but something else?

Please contact us on AWSLondon1@gmail.com, and tell us what you want.

Finally, some links we thought might help you through the coming months –

[Leisure](#)

- If you are stuck at home : <https://www.timeout.com/things-to-do/best-things-to-do-at-home-stuck-inside-bored>
- or you want to go out and about : <https://www.timeout.com/london/culture>

Practical help and information

If you need serious help or information –

- Solicitors Assistance Scheme (Employment & Regulatory) <http://www.thesas.org.uk/>
- LawCare (Mental Health) : <https://www.lawcare.org.uk/covid-19>
- Solicitors' Benevolent Association £1M Personal Hardship Fund : <https://www.sba.org.uk/covid-19/>
- Law Society information and advice : <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/advice/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-and-updates/>
- ACAS guidance for employers and employees; also financial support for self-employed : <https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus/if-the-employer-needs-to-close-the-workplace>
- Which – how to apply for a mortgage holiday : <https://www.which.co.uk/news/2020/09/coronavirus-how-to-apply-for-a-three-month-mortgage-payment-holiday/>
- Express – mortgage holiday extension : <https://www.express.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/1341233/mortgage-holiday-extension-has-mortgage-holiday-been-extended-coronavirus>
- Simmons Gainsford overall update on measures announced by HMG to assist businesses and individuals with Covid 19 disruptions : <https://www.sqllp.co.uk/measures-announced-by-hmrc-to-assist-businesses-and-individuals-with-covid-19-disruptions/>
- Government support for landlords and renters : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-and-renting-guidance-for-landlords-tenants-and-local-authorities/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-landlords-and-tenants>

Keep well and safe until we meet in person.

Virginia Cannon

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Linda Davies on 10 November 2020. Linda was a long standing member of the Association of Women Solicitors London and a former chair. She also worked as an administrator for the organisation for 6 years. She will be sorely missed, and a member of the committee attended a wonderful funeral service on 26 November 2020. Below is a link to her funeral website where there is an opportunity to post a message and make a donation to her chosen charity the Eve Appeal. An obituary will be in our next newsletter.

<https://whiterosefuneralnotices.co.uk/linda-davies/>



COMING SOON

FREE EMPLOYMENT ADVICE will shortly be available
On employee issues particularly affecting women lawyers from



In the form of a **30 MINUTE PERSONAL CONSULTATION**
FREE to Members of



WATCH OUT FOR MAILING WHEN THIS GOES LIVE



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- Spotlight on Committee Member: Christl Hughes

- Spotlight on prejudice: Alexandra Wilson

- Tribute to US Supreme Court Judge, Ruth Bader Ginsburg

- Ann Crighton: Becoming a Solicitor and subsequently an “uber type barrister”

- Law Gazette Round-up 2020

- Recent AWS Events:
 - Gong Bath
 - Murder Mystery

- Book Review Corner:
 - The Mile End Murder by Sinclair McKay
 - RODHAM by Curtis Sittenfield

- Great British Bake-Off Inspired Corner:
 - Halva Cookies
 - Carrot and Coriander Soup



COVID-19: Committee Members Experiences

It is seven months since the UK first locked down due to Covid-19. The pandemic has affected us all in our own way. Some have, sadly, suffered illness, loss and/or financial hardship and our thoughts are with them.

All of us have had to change our way of living and working and we share below two of our committee members', experiences about the effect Covid-19 has had in their personal lives, work and working practices.

Starting a new job in a pandemic- Nicola Wainwright

I joined my firm, JMW Solicitors LLP, to head up their clinical negligence team in London on 1 April 2020. Even when we agreed the start date in late 2019, I wondered whether April Fool's Day was the most auspicious date to choose. Come March 2020 it was confirmed that my timing could have been better.

I started at JMW just over a week after the UK went into lockdown. Everyone at JMW was welcoming and always helpful, but, as you can imagine, starting a new job in a pandemic is an unusual experience.

For the first week I had to remind myself I had changed jobs. I was sitting in the same 'office' (home) as I had been with my previous firm. There was not a change in physical surroundings which would usually mark a change of employer.

However, equally being alone at home meant first day nerves were not as fraught. I avoided the day one 'rabbit caught in the headlights' look as the new girl being introduced to too many people at once with no hope of remembering all of their names. My floundering, as I tried to get to grips with new ways of working, was done in the privacy of my kitchen and my exclamations of frustration at the new case management system heard only by my neighbours.

Not only that, the effects of lockdown meant everyone was out of their comfort zone, adjusting to new ways of working. Selfishly, I thought at least I was not alone in that respect.

I found people were more patient and more understanding - not only colleagues but also opponents. Long may that continue!

But it also had its' challenges. They were, of course, nothing compared to what many have been through with illness, bereavement and job losses, but my experience brought home to me how much we take some aspects of how we used to/usually work for granted.

Settling in and getting familiar with my new firm has taken longer than it would have otherwise. Not being in the office means I didn't get the sense of the place as quickly. I could not learn how things worked by watching and listening. I've realised how much we rely on osmosis to learn information we sometimes don't even know we've acquired or realised we need. Working remotely means finding out how things work comes less naturally and requires more effort. There has been no popping into the next office or leaning across to the next desk to ask a question.

It's not only the practicalities and ways of working that it has taken more time to get to know, but also the people. I have still not been able to meet all of my new colleagues. I feel that to start with I had less of a sense of people as a result of not witnessing how they interacted on a day to day basis. There were no impromptu chats around the water cooler, at the start and end of meetings or anywhere else. Communication was, of course, possible but had to be prearranged and planned and effortful and the pre/post meeting gossip was muted on zoom.

However, experiencing these challenges means I am more aware and appreciative of the day to day benefits of face to face/office working which perhaps passed me by before and which I know now I need to think about for all those 'new starters' coming after me.

Personal experience- Virginia Cannon

First, lockdown. Complete cancellation of Summer at a stroke. Diary empty of all social events. Summer opera, leisurely days with parties of friends, Glasto, Horse Trials, Royal Ascot – all gone. Replaced by 'the fear' – dire warnings from scientists, press and government.

But a wonderful spring, and a chance to observe it. Cherry blossom, flowers going bonkers. Discovering Zooming with friends. Catching up with people I had not seen or talked to for ages! Beautiful weather, lots of sunshine.

Then wow – everything starts opening up. Arts have outdoor live performances. We can travel again! Holiday in South of France actually happens, where I almost forgot about the pandemic, because we can do everything outdoors, in the blazing sun – go for a drink, a meal, meet friends, so the only place where you need to wear a mask is in the supermarket. The fear almost disappears.

Then back to quarantine – not so bad, really. But then infection figures start to rise, at different rates in different parts of the UK and the rest of the world, and everything starts closing in again. Wildly varying and confusing statistics, and estimates of vaccine availability or efficacy, are flung out right left and centre by scientists, press, and politicians. The fear comes back and intensifies. Rumours run riot – they're not going to close anything down – they are going to close everything down – nothing will happen until next week – it's actually happening tomorrow! And it did.

When I was learning to be a lawyer, I had to work really hard to become systematic, both in my approach to work, and to planning and thinking through timings and consequences – it did not come naturally. Likewise, in my social life, doing the things I enjoyed with the people I wanted to do them with meant I had to do a great deal of advance planning to achieve that. I became quite proud of my ability to do that. Now that is impossible. Rules about what you can and cannot do change almost daily, and the logic behind them becomes increasingly impenetrable. We have lost control over our lives.

For me, the uncertainty, inability to plan with any degree of confidence, and constant warfare between experts, politicians and pundits, all fighting to make us listen to their wildly differing views, is the most depressing, debilitating and exhausting thing about the pandemic. Apart from the fear, of course, as I am one of the more vulnerable. And the fact that all news seems to be dominated by the pandemic, except when Brexit takes over. The one ray of sunshine is that Strictly is back! I never used to watch it much before, but now it is much-needed pure escapism, even if only once a week. After that – I wonder what will happen to Christmas?

SPOTLIGHT ON COMMITTEE MEMBER: CHRISTL HUGHES MBE

Leicestershire Law Society President

In September Leicestershire Law Society held its AGM by Zoom. The meeting saw the election and formal inauguration of Christl Hughes, the 10th female President in 170 years and the first woman to be elected to the office for a second time.

After 30 years in high street practice, Christl is a trustee and immediate past chair of The Solicitors' Charity and on the Committee of AWS London. She was also Chair of the former national Association of Women Solicitors. She was awarded the MBE in the 2020 New Year's Honours List for services to equality & charity.



SPOTLIGHT ON PREJUDICE: ALEXANDRA WILSON



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After being shouted at, ordered to leave the courtroom and treated dismissively on multiple occasions, Barrister Alexandra Wilson felt compelled to speak out on Twitter about her experiences. She explained that she felt humiliated about how she was treated and how no one, Defendant or Barrister, should have been treated in that way.

On one particular day, Alexandra was first stopped by the security guard at the Court who mistook her for being a Defendant and asked her to confirm whether she was on “on the list” (the list of Defendants). Alexandra explained she was a barrister.

She was next stopped by a member of the public when she went to enter the courtroom in order to speak to the prosecutor of the case before the hearing. That member of the public told Alexandra she could not go into the Court as “only lawyers can go in”. Alexandra explained she was a barrister. An usher who had recognised Alexandra from previous trips to the Court told her to ignore the member of the public and to enter the Court.

Once Alexandra was inside the courtroom another Solicitor/Barrister immediately turned around and told her that she needed to wait outside Court and said the Usher would sign her into Court and would call her in for her case. Alexandra explained for the third time that day that she was a barrister.

Alexandra continued to walk through the courtroom in order to speak to the prosecutor of the case. Before she reached them, the Clerk of the Court shouted at her to tell her that she needed to leave the Court and that the Usher would be out to speak to her. They asked whether she was represented. For the fourth time that day Alexandra had to explain that she was a barrister who was trying to speak to the prosecutor of the case.

On reflecting on the incident Alexandra explained how, like all the other legal representatives at Court, she had been dressed in a black suit with black shoes and was carrying her laptop. Every other legal representative that day was white and they had been able to enter and leave the courtroom without challenge. None of them had been mistaken for a Defendant or had been ordered to leave the courtroom or spoken to in a dismissive way. The only thing that set Alexandra apart from her peers was the colour of her skin.

After Alexandra spoke out on Twitter, many black barristers both junior and QCs explained how they too had similar experiences in Court and sadly Alexandra's experience was not unique. Sadly, this highlights how much of a systemic issue this is and how there needs to be change.

Alexandra's story continued to gain traction and was reported widely across the media. Her story was 're-tweeted' over 15,000 times and prompted support from a number of high profile parliamentarians. The Chief Executive of HMCTS issued an apology and has since launched a formal investigation. President of the Supreme Court, Lord Reed, stated that Alexandra's experience was "appalling". He further stated that he 'hopes' to see the appointment of a BAME justice before he is succeeded as president in six years' time.

Whilst such statements helpfully shine the spotlight on this issue, real and tangible action is required. Alexandra believes that the way forward is for all those working in the criminal justice system, from the court staff to barristers, to have compulsory anti-racist training that goes further than equality and diversity guidance.

You can read more about her experiences as a young mixed-race barrister working in the criminal justice system, in Alexandra's book 'In Black and White: A Young Barrister's Story of Race and Class in a Broken Justice System'.

Alexandra also founded Black Women in Law, a community aiming to unite Black Women from across the world in the legal profession. Follow them on Twitter @BlackWomenLaw for further information.

Suleikha Ali and Emma Kendall

TRIBUTE TO US SUPREME JUDGE, RUTH BADER GINSBERG



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Ruth Bader grew up in Brooklyn in a low-income family. She became arguably the single most important female lawyer in the history of the US. She became the first female member of the Harvard Law Review. Ruth is affectionately known in the media as “Notorious RBG”.

Ruth Bader obtained her bachelor’s degree in government from Cornell University in 1954 finishing first in her class. She married law student Martin Ginsberg the same year and was known after that as Ruth Bader Ginsberg. The early years of the marriage were challenging to say the least, as their daughter Jane was born shortly after Martin was drafted into the military. Martin served for two years and after his discharge Ruth enrolled at Harvard. In those days, the law department at Harvard was a hostile male-dominated environment. There were only eight other females in her class of more than five hundred.

In 1956, Martin developed testicular cancer. Ruth had to look after Jane and her convalescing husband, even taking notes for him in his classes whilst she continued her own law studies. Martin recovered, graduated, and accepted a position at a New York law firm.

Ruth transferred to Columbia Law school so she could join her husband in New York. She graduated first in her class in 1959. Despite her outstanding academic record, Ruth encountered gender discrimination while seeking employment. One of her professors recommended her for a clerkship with the Supreme Court justice Felix Frankfurter. Frankfurter declined saying he wasn’t ready to hire a woman.

After clerking for a New York District Judge for two years, Ruth taught at Columbia Law School where she was the school’s first female tenured professor. In the 1970s, she also founded and was director of the Women’s Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union. By 1974, the project had participated in three hundred gender discrimination cases nationwide. Ruth personally argued six gender discrimination cases before the then all male Supreme Court. She won five of those cases.

Reed v Reed 1971 extended the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment (originally ratified to protect the rights of freed slaves) to women. In Reed a young boy, Richard, died and his mother Sally applied to be administrator of his estate. Although Sally’s application was made



first, the application of his father, Sally's estranged husband, was approved under an Idaho law that stated, "males must be preferred to females"! Ruth successfully argued that this violated the Equal Protection Clause.

In *Frontiero v Richardson* 1973, gender discrimination in the compensation of members of the military was barred.

in *Wienberger v Wiesenfeld* 1975, gender discrimination in state benefits was struck out.

In *Craig v Boren* 1976, Ruth persuaded the Supreme Court that state laws that discriminated on the basis of sex needed to be subjected to, at least, intermediate scrutiny. This case concerned laws that specified different minimum drinking ages for men and women!!

In *Duren v Missouri* 1979 Ruth challenged a law which provided that jury service was optional for women. She won the case by arguing that women should have equal responsibilities.

In the early 1970s, statutes in the US still regarded men as breadwinners and women as dependents. However, by 1976, many state family, tax and financial laws were declared unconstitutional. Taken together, Ruth's victories discouraged the legislature from treating men and women differently under the law.

Ruth was appointed to the US Supreme Court by President Bill Clinton in 1993. President Clinton wanted a replacement with the intellect and political skills to deal with the more conservative members of the court. As a judge, Ruth was considered part of the Supreme Court's moderate liberal block presenting a strong voice in favour of gender equality, the rights of workers and the separation of church and state.

Ruth continued her fight for equality in the Supreme Court as a Justice. In *Ledbetter v Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co*, Lily Ledbetter sued her employer for what she alleged was discriminatory pay. Although Lily started out on the same salary as her co-workers, by the end of their tenure at Goodyear, she made thousands less a year. The case had to consider whether Lily could sue years after the discrimination took place. The court, by a five to four majority, disagreed. In her 2007 dissent which she read from the bench Ruth argued that the 180-day time limit did not apply as gender-based discrimination can happen gradually. "A worker knows immediately if she is denied a promotion or transfer," Ruth said. "Compensation disparities, in contrast, are often hidden from sight." She went on to say, "The ball is in Congress' Court". In 2009, President Obama signed the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which reset the statute of limitations on equal pay lawsuits with every paycheck.

Throughout her time on the Supreme Court, Ruth stood firm on a woman's right to have an abortion.

Ruth gained a lot of attention for her dissenting opinion in the case of *Bush v Gore* which effectively decided the 2000 presidential election between George W Bush and Al Gore.

Ruth continued to promote women's rights from the Supreme Court for a total of 27 years until her death from complications from pancreatic cancer on 18 September 2020. She is sorely missed.

Margaret Hatwood

ANN CRIGHTON: BECOMING A SOLICITOR AND SUBSEQUENTLY AN UBER TYPE OF BARRISTER

I left school at 16 and in my mid-20s, decided to become a lawyer.

Whilst working full-time, I managed to qualify as Legal Executive. In 1992, I qualified as a Solicitor, in 2000 was granted Higher Court Rights and in 2015, I transferred over to the Bar. Originally, I joined Chambers, but I quickly realised I could secure both my own clients and instructions from solicitors. On completing a Direct Access course, I was granted authority to act for clients directly without the need to go via a solicitor. I also took a course to obtain litigation rights meaning I could go on the Court record as acting for clients i.e. in the capacity of a solicitor.

I am not the usual type of barrister and describe myself as an 'Uber type of barrister – the future of the legal profession'. In the old days, we used black cabs which, in comparison to Ubers, were expensive. One reason for this may be that black cab drivers are required to take 'the knowledge' which generally took 2 years to learn. Now we have Ubers and the drivers use Sat Nav. As an Uber type of barrister, clients can instruct me directly. Some obvious advantages are that: (1) fees are lower because we "cut out the middle man" and also I have few overheads, (2) I look after the case from start to finish both taking instructions and representing the client in Court and (3) the client has the security of knowing he/she will be represented throughout by a lawyer who knows their case. This is as opposed to a barrister they meet in Court, and whom they must trust immediately to have a good grip on their case and the relevant expertise.

How did I transfer from being a solicitor to a barrister? First, I had to be a Higher Court Advocate (HCA). Then there were two routes to transfer – either demonstrating relevant experience in your field to the Law Society (in my case criminal law) or pass an exam. Having worked for the CPS as a Prosecutor for 17 years, I had ample evidence that I had the relevant experience. Other hoops to jump through were paying £100 to the Law Society to produce a Certificate of Good Standing, joining an Inn (there are four) – I chose Middle Temple, filling out an application form, obtaining recommendations from two Barristers and paying a fee of around £230. Next, I had to fill in a lengthy application form and pay the Bar Standards Board another fee of £440. The Bar will accept Solicitor HCAs transferring over to the Bar exempting them from pupillage, but they must satisfy the Bar Standards Board that they are a fit and proper person to become a Barrister with relevant experience in the chosen field. After approval I applied to be called to the 'utter Bar' which involved attending a very grand ceremony in my chosen Inn.

For the first three years I was regarded as a new/young barrister (despite my age) and had to take part in the New Practitioners course which involved attending mandatory training sessions which I did not find particularly onerous. I did enjoy attending the compulsory dinners at Middle Temple which, although I had to pay for them, I found to be very reasonable (around £50 a go).

Prior to becoming a sole practitioner and setting up my own chambers (which in reality means I work from home), as a new practitioner I had to obtain various exemptions from the Bar Standards Board each attracting a fee. First, an exemption so that I could become a sole practitioner. Second, an exemption so that I could do the Direct Access course and be authorised to be a Direct Access Barrister. Third (and this was tricky) an exemption to be granted Litigation Rights.

Dealing with the Bar Standards Board is a bit like dealing with the SRA – I sometimes felt that all that was required was to write to them on the back of a cheque.

I now specialise in motoring law for various reasons: (1) I receive instructions from private clients rather dealing with Legal Aid which can be tricky to navigate and (2) I get fixed dates for hearings in the Magistrates Court and for appeals to the Crown Court. I therefore do not have to get involved with warned lists.

One of my clients did a review that finished, 'Looking at a ban? Better call Ann' – which I now use as a strap line. If I have any regrets, then it is not becoming self-employed years ago. I am good at what I do, and I love what I do. I help people from all walks of life and meet different people daily (excluding the time of the pandemic), constantly travel to different places and save clients a lot of money. I can charge a fraction of what other lawyers charge because I have so few overheads. So, despite my age, I believe my business model is the future of the legal profession. If you are interested check my website www.crightonchambers.co.uk

Ann Crighton



LAW GAZETTE: ROUND UP 2020

It has been an interesting year in the legal press, not only because of the dreaded COVID-19. Here's a quick round up of some interesting stories from the one and only Gazette.

4 February 2020 – Four months on, SDT publishes Beckwith judgment

Four months after the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal (SDT) fined a magic circle partner accused of sexual misconduct £35,000.00, the judgment dated 30 January 2020 was published.

<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/four-months-on-sdt-publishes-beckwith-judgment/5102975.article>

On 20 October 2020 this case was appealed to the Queen's Bench Division.

<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/ex-freshfields-partner-appeals-misconduct-finding-in-high-court-5106070.article>

11 March 2020 – Solicitor, 66, banned after trying to kiss 15-year-old in a pub

A practitioner was convicted at the magistrate's court and agreed to be struck off after a legal career spanning almost 40 years.

<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/solicitor-66-banned-after-trying-to-kiss-15-year-old-in-pub/5103428.article>

7 April 2020 – Junior Solicitor banned for lies about briefcase left on a train

A junior solicitor who left a suitcase with sensitive documents on a train and then lied to her firm to buy herself time to find it was struck off the roll.

<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/junior-solicitor-banned-for-lies-about-briefcase-left-on-a-train/5103789.article>

On 22 April 2020 the Gazette reported that the solicitor had filed an appeal with pro-bono assistance.

<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/exclusive-struck-off-junior-files-appeal-with-pro-bono-help/5103964.article>

26 May 2020 --Solicitor banned for bluffing to opposing party over mediation

An associate solicitor in a South Wales firm was struck off for stating to opposition lawyers that counsel had been instructed to represent his client at mediation, when no one had in fact been instructed.

<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/solicitor-banned-for-bluffing-to-opposing-party-over-mediation/5104383.article>

26 June 2020 – Junior lawyer fined £10k over Facebook messages conviction

An SDT case around the perils of dabbling in negative social media.

<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/junior-lawyer-fined-10k-over-facebook-messages-conviction/5104793.article>

22 July 2020 saw the headline “‘Drunk’ senior partner touched paralegal inappropriately in front of colleagues”.

The SDT heard that Julian Critchlow, 63, of Al Bawardi Critchlow Solicitors, touched a female paralegal’s leg, back and neck inappropriately whilst being “extremely drunk” at a wine bar where he had taken lunch and stayed until the evening.

<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/drunken-senior-partner-touched-paralegal-inappropriately-in-front-of-colleagues/5105101.article>

21 August 2020 – Struck-off solicitor criticised for ‘grossly offensive’ George Floyd reference

The SDT used the word “disgrace” to a struck off solicitor’s attempt to link his regulatory history to the death of George Floyd in the US.

<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/struck-off-solicitor-criticised-for-grossly-offensive-george-floyd-reference/5105391.article>

24 September 2020 – Investigation launched after black barrister mistaken for defendant.

An investigation was commenced by the Chief Executive of HM Courts & Tribunals Service into how a black criminal and family law barrister, Alexandra Wilson, was repeatedly mistaken for a defendant in court on 23 September 2020.

https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/investigation-launched-after-black-barrister-mistaken-for-defendant/5105752.article?utm_source=gazette_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Black+barrister+mistaken+for+defendant+%7c+Evening+courts+%7c+Family+lawyers+%e2%80%98isolated%27_09%2f24%2f2020

21 October 2020 – KKK office joke was ‘just playful’, tribunal told

In the week that this article was published, an experienced solicitor described the act of making a hat look like those worn by members of the Ku Klux Klan was a ‘playful joke’ and not racially motivated.

<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/kkk-office-joke-was-just-playful-tribunal-told/5106075.article>

Elaine O’Connor

RECENT EVENTS:

GONG BATH

On 30 June we were delighted that Selma Studer Founder at GONG (aboutgong.com) hosted a special sound meditation event for AWS. Members were invited to a virtual gong bath for the chance to relax and reset. Many thanks to Selma for hosting such a wonderful event.

The sound of the gong playing induces sleep and mediation and can shift your mind into a restorative state. All you have to do is lie back and enjoy the sound. I absolutely love gong baths. My personal experience from attending many of these is a better night's sleep and is a great way to unwind after a stressful day.

I am very pleased to say that we raised £70 for The Black, African and Asian Therapy Network, a social enterprise (www.baatn.org.uk) which aims to address the inequality of access to psychological services for Black, African, South Asian and Caribbean people in the UK.



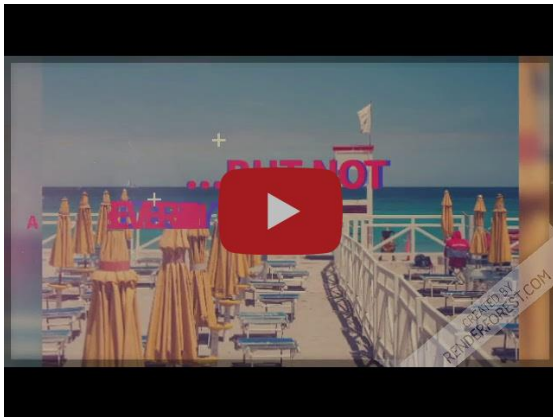
It was wonderful to share the experience with our members and committee members and try something a little different during the lockdown. Our Newsletter Editor Rachael Scott shared some of her experience of the gong bath;

'I had never heard of a Gong Bath until Kavita mentioned it and was intrigued about what it was and how it worked. Unlike the name suggests there is no water involved! Selma was a great host, she talked us through how to prepare for a gong bath and what to expect. She advised us to lie down somewhere comfortable (e.g. on my bed), close my eyes and put on my headphones. The sound of the gong quickly washed over me and I forgot about everything else going on - it was a lovely relaxing, mediative experience. It was so nice for once to do a zoom event where I didn't need to interact or put my camera on but still get so much out of it! Afterwards I felt so relaxed. I would totally recommend it, especially in these uncertain times'.

Kavita Bhupal



MURDER MYSTERY



“It’s summer, 1991....Bryan Adams is STILL at number one with “(Everything I do) I do it for you” after knocking Jason Donovan off the top spot with “Any dream will do”. We are all still enjoying Madonna’s Immaculate Collection and at Cheeseman’s Holiday Park, the summer is just ending. Dustin Cheeseman wants to make some changes to his park, bring in something new....A LASER QUEST! But not everyone is happy with these changes... Come and join AWS London to help Detective Slaughter discover who killed Barry Cheeseman.”

That is how the scene was set for the AWSL Murder Mystery event on 22 July. When we joined by Zoom, we were introduced to the characters, who each gave their version of events, and to Detective Slaughter. Of course, they all said they could not possibly have killed the boss (Barry Cheeseman), but gave hints as to who might have, and really got into their character parts and acted up wonderfully. Butlins Redcoats eat your hearts out!

We then divided into Breakout Rooms, and were visited by each of the characters in turn, for the group to question them under strict time limits, with Detective Slaughter popping in. Questions revealed dramatic developments in their stories, lots of bitching and back-stabbing, with alibis established, only to be cast into doubt again. For the denouement, we were assembled again with Detective Slaughter, and asked who we thought had done it.

In the end, the villain turned out to be the one who had given the impression of being most cool and detached, having the least motivation to murder the boss. This front concealed a deep-buried hatred for him, who had ignored and sidelined him for years, taking the credit for the work he had done in building up the Holiday Park. The boss’s current plans for development of the Park were the last straw, shattering the murderer’s job and prestige.

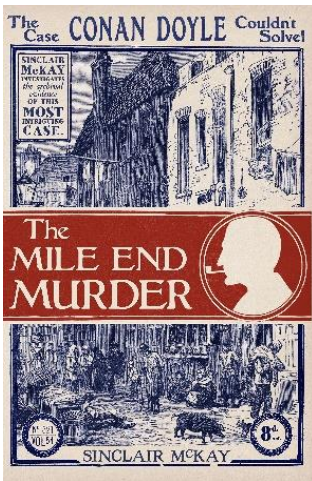
Only one person guessed the right answer!

A great fun evening, well-crafted, engrossing and pure escapism, just what we needed at the time. Thank you Play Dead London – and thank you Amy, our previous Chair, who acts in these events, as well as helping to organise them, and set this one up for AWSL.

Virginia Cannon

BOOK REVIEW CORNER:

THE MILE END MURDER BY SINCLAIR MCKAY



It is London, the East End in 1860. On Thursday 17 August rich widow Mrs Mary Elmsley is found dead at her home, 9 Grove Road, Mile End London E3 5AJ. Death was caused by a single blow to the back of her head. The deceased was the owner of a substantial property portfolio, had no children of her own and died intestate. Who Dunit? And Why?

The author makes a reasonable argument that the man tried and convicted and was not the murderer. But the account really comes alive with the huge media interest culminating in a public hanging (8 years before such a sentence was abolished) and a crowd of up to 30,000 people. The Court of Appeal was yet to be founded and the Society for the Abolition of the Death Penalty had over 100 years to wait.

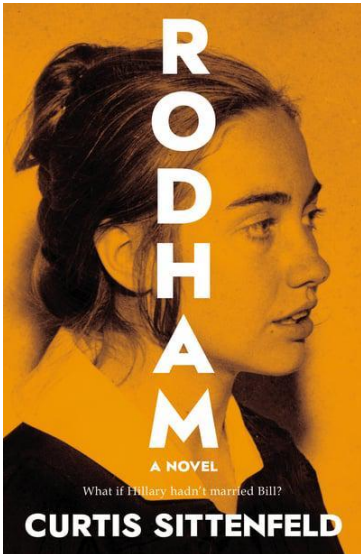
Dickens covers the plight of the poor, his contemporaries, in his earlier novels. However, the descriptions in this book of the squalor, stench, noise, and the overcrowded conditions in which Mrs Elmsley's tenants were forced to live, are just as vivid. And she only rarely allowed more than a couple of days' arrears before eviction to the workhouse and streets. The new Public Health legislation was very much in its infancy, albeit transpiring to be the ancestor of the Coronavirus Act 2020.

So, one must be grateful for modern Housing Law and lawyers. The descriptions of the legal process, and in particular the Inquest, are fascinating. If dealing today William Rose, the deceased's solicitor and estate manager, would have to declare a conflict.

Christl Hughes

* The house is still there.

RODHAM BY CURTIS SITTFELD



This is a story of Hillary Rodham but imagines that she ditched Bill Clinton when they were both young and explores what her career might have been. The cover is intriguing and, in the photo, Hillary looks more like a Jane Austen heroine than the ballsy Law Professor who went on to have a brilliant career.

I understand that the first third of the book is largely based on Hillary's life. There is quite a lot of graphic sex in the first third. One of the members of a book club I belong to commented that, as it was bad sex, it had obviously been written by a man and I had to correct her. Indeed, the description of the boredom of a prolonged sex session with Bill is unlikely to have been written by a man unless he was himself telling the world that his performance was substandard. On this occasion it appears that Hillary is clearly bored. I think this may resonate with many women.

Hillary's early professional life was similar to that of Ruth Bader Ginsberg (see my tribute to that fine Supreme Court Judge elsewhere in this issue).

The book is also interesting in that the early part of Hillary's venture into politics was at a time when standards in public life were different. There is a description of Hillary having her legs shaved in a car on the way to a rally by a junior employee. The incident comes back to bite her in the future.

Another key moment in the book for me is one where Hillary goes to Bill's many years later, for what she thinks is an intimate dinner at his home. She imagines that they may have steamy sex together, or at least that Bill will make a pass. What happens will resonate with women over 45.

Hillary's character comes across well. I felt a combination of admiration for her intelligence but with some irritation. The characters do sing off the page and there is an amusing portrait of Trump which is authentic.

I certainly enjoyed this book enough to want to read Sittenfeld's earlier book, American Wife.

Margaret Hatwood (aged over 45!)

GREAT BRITISH BAKE-OFF INSPIRED CORNER:

HALVA COOKIES

These biscuits melt in the mouth!

NB These biscuits may be dangerous for those with a nut allergy so do not risk making or eating them

Courtesy of Ronen Givon and Christian Mouysset and published in Olive Magazine in May 2020.



© Olive Magazine

Ingredients

- 150 g plain flour
- 100g softened unsalted butter
- 85g Tahini (sesame seed paste)
- Half teaspoonful of vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoonful Baking powder
- 85g caster sugar
- Oven Temperature 180 C fan

Step 1

line 2 baking trays with greaseproof or baking parchment I also butter grease proof paper.

Step 2

Cream sugar and butter together until light and fluffy. Add Tahini and vanilla and beat together until smooth.

Mix baking powder and flour then sieve. At this stage I turn the oven on. Beat the flour gradually into the tahini mixture. Divide dough into 15 pieces and roll each into a ball and put on the baking tray leaving some space to spread during baking. Flatten balls with fork or fingers and bake for 8 to 10 mins until tops have cracked and the biscuits are a very pale golden. Remove from oven don't move onto cooling tray for a few minutes as they will crumble.

NB you need to watch them as if you over cook the tahini gives a bitter taste.

Margaret Hatwood

CARROT AND CORIANDER SOUP

A really simple BBC Good Food recipe- a really good lunch option now the weather is getting colder!

Prep and cooking time: 30 minutes



© BBC Good Food

Ingredients

serves 4

1. 1 tbsp vegetable oil (doesn't need to be vegetable)
2. 1 onion, sliced
3. 450g/1lb carrots, peeled and sliced
4. 1 tsb ground coriander
5. 1.2 litres/ 2 pints vegetable stock (first time I did this I only had chicken stock- and it was still lovely!)
6. Fresh coriander, roughly chopped
7. Salt and pepper

Method

1. Heat the oil in a large frying pan and add the onions and carrots. Cook for 3-4 minutes until starting to soften
2. Stir in the ground coriander and season with salt and pepper. Cook for 1 minute.
3. Add the vegetable stock and bring to the boil. Simmer for 10-15 minutes or until the vegetables are tender
4. Whizz with a blender until smooth (or your personal preference). Reheat in a saucepan, stir in fresh coriander and serve.

Rachael Scott

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