

PLYMOUTH LAW SCHOOL MOOTING REPORT 2010-2011 COMPETITIVE EDGE AND NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

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Mooting Officer

In the sixteenth century Sir Edward Coke first gained acclaim for his skills in advocacy as a student, mooting the famous 'Cook's Case' in Inner Temple in protest of the poor culinary offerings to the students at the time. He later went on to represent the state against Guy Fawkes as Attorney General, challenge the King's power as Chief Justice of the King's Bench and substantially change the law of England as a leader in Parliament. Although we could not guarantee a seat in Parliament nor a judgeship, Victoria Lush and I worked hard to facilitate the best mooting experience possible for Plymouth University students.

In the 2010-2011 the Plymouth University Law School also showed its support for the students. From writing mooting problems to providing judges to helping financially, the mooters were able to participate in the highest number of external competitions in University history. In return, the mooters defeated universities such as Nottingham, King's College London and Liverpool on the way to national success.

External Competitions

The depth of the mooting squad this year allowed for many different rookies and veterans to shine in various competitions, internal and external. David Murray (2009 Plymouth Internal Moot Champion) and Victoria Lush (Deputy Mooting Officer) travelled across the country from Nottingham to London, defeating three consecutive teams to earn the UK Law Students' Association national championship (see below). This was the first time Plymouth entered this competition.

Joshua Lintern (2011 Plymouth Champion) and Laura Offer (2010 Plymouth Champion) combined forces to also take on a new competition for the squad: the Inner Temple Inter Varsity moot. The mooting style was unique in this tournament, requiring mooters to argue (on either side) the same case multiple times in a one-day knock-out-style tournament. The two showed strong advocacy skills, endurance and legal knowledge that would make any barrister proud, with a strong finish in the semifinal.

Zachary Bishop (Year One), Edward Bayliss (Graduate Diploma in Law) and David Murray mooted together at Gray's Inn for Plymouth University's second showing in the Jessup International Moot Cup. The moot involved two days of mooting in four preliminary rounds, followed by elimination rounds for the top teams. The topic is always focussed on public international law, which is not currently taught at Plymouth. This afforded the competitors a unique opportunity to develop their independent study in a new area of law. Joshua Lintern thankfully offered his veteran skills (he competed in Jessup the previous year) as researching team-member to assist the mooters. Further, he was instrumental in the final edit and composition of the 'Memorial,' an 11,000 word legal submission that contributes substantially to the teams' scores and rankings. This year the team improved upon its 0-4 performance last year with a strong 1-3 result (nearly 2-2 with a close moot against the tournament-champions Durham) but did not advance to elimination. The team did not take this too much to heart, as Oxford, KCL and LSE also did not survive the preliminary rounds. We were thankful for the assistance of Frank Norton, long-time Jessup judge, who ventured down to Plymouth as a guest speaker to offer his guidance on the competition in the months prior.

Wrapping up the externals, Plymouth participated in (and hosted a round) in the Weekly Law Reports and Oxford University Press/BPP mooting competitions. Judging for the two competitions were Kelly Scrivener (Devon Chambers, Plymouth, Call 2001) and Martin Meeke QC (Head of Colleton Chambers, Exeter) respectively. Putting in strong performances were Joshua Lintern and David Murray in the WLR and Lintern and Iain Henning in the OUP/BPP, both at the Plymouth Crown Court. Unfortunately, the squad did not advance in either competition as it was early in the season. However, the experience proved very beneficial in training the squad for success in later competitions mentioned above.

The UKSLA Moot

Most notably this year, Plymouth University were crowned national champions at the UK Law Students Association moot (UKLSA). In a knockout-style elimination competition, David Murray (2009 Plymouth Internal Moot Champion) and Victoria Lush (Deputy Mooting Officer) travelled around the country, beating team after team to reach the final in London. Although Nottingham had the fortune of winning in the early rounds of the OUP/BPP in Plymouth during term one, the duo knocked them out of this tournament during the first round in Nottingham. For the semi-final, only one week later, they stopped the run of King's College London, in London, with their

second victory. Less than a week later they took on the last remaining team, Liverpool, in the final at 9-12 Bell Yard Chambers next to the Royal Courts of Justice. Judging were top criminal barristers Jonathan Hall (Call 1994) and his esteemed colleague Tracey Elliot (Call 1986). The national championship trophy is now proudly showcased at the law school offices at 20 Portland Villas, although adjustments had to be made to the cabinet to allow for the size of the trophy. Lush and Murray are now sitting the Bar Practitioner's Training Course (BPTC) at BPP Law School in London.



UKSLA final Left to Right: Emma Wood (Liverpool), Tracey Elliot (Call 1986), Victoria Lush, David Murray, Lauren Blackman (Liverpool), Jonathan Hall (Call 1994)

The Internal Tournament

Plymouth mooting enjoyed a successful internal tournament yet again this year. The popular competition included six rounds with the trademark semi-finals and final held in the Crown Court thanks to the courtesy of the HM Courts service. Victoria Lush (Deputy Mooting Officer) took on the bulk of the burden organizing teams and competitions in the early rounds while lecturers kindly offered their time composing mooting problems and judging in several instances.

Prior to the tournament, Julia Cox (Devon Chambers, Plymouth) kindly offered to host a workshop explaining the nature of mooting to the rookies, as well as judging a demonstration round. Further, a new 'practice round' was held in the subsequent weeks to give the new mooters a chance to test their skills outside of the proper competitive environment.

This year's final was judged once again by long-time Plymouth mooting supporter Judge Taylor, along with William Higginson (King's Bench Chambers, Plymouth) and Jason Beal (Devon Chambers). The finalist victors after a gruelling three panel moot were Joshua Lintern and Emma Pierce with runners up James Simmons and Stacy Higgs. The judges were impressed at this year's quality of mooting, especially as all competitors were second years and had not yet studied the area of law for the final problem (criminal).

Elected to take over for the 2011-2012 season were the very capable Emma Pierce and Lucy Nash, who look to continue to improve the programme to provide the best year of mooting yet.



Internal Competition Left to Right: Runners up Stacy Higgs and James Simmonds behind Jason Beal, Judge Taylor, Winners Josh Lintern and Emma Pierce