**Junior COMBAR – 2019-2020**

At the outset, I should stress that none of Junior COMBAR’s activities would have been possible if I had not been assisted by the committed and diligent work of my committee who have consistently endeavored to support Junior COMBAR’s activities around their heavy workloads. Similarly, we would not have been able to achieve any of what follows if we had not had the support of the COMBAR Exec and Sonia, in particular.

With a brand-new committee established in 2019, it was my intention that Junior COMBAR would become much more visible and active and I think that we have achieved this aim. We essentially had two objectives: to increase the amount of socialising between Junior commercial barristers from across the commercial Bar and to also provide networking opportunities for our members to network with city solicitors.

This year Junior COMBAR has built on and strengthened its relationship with the Junior London Solicitor’s Litigation Association (“JLSLA”). The JLSLA is currently chaired by Charlotte Hill (Pennington Manches Cooper) and I hope to organise further joint events with the JLSLA during my tenure as Chair of Junior COMBAR.

Our first event was a Joint seminar with the JLSLA – “Bear witness: Dos and don'ts for using factual witness evidence for trial” held on Monday, 7 October, 2019 . The panelists included myself, The Honourable Mr Justice Waksman, Ed Williams QC – Director, Assurety Training, Jonathan Fozard – Group Counsel, The Casbah and Charlotte Hill.

Our second event was our inaugural Junior COMBAR drinks held on Thursday 31 October 2019 at Daly’s Wine Bar. This was a resounding success. We received a large amount of positive feedback from the barristers who attended this event and I think it was particularly welcomed by pupil barristers. We had over 100 barristers in attendance.

Our third event was a breakfast seminar held on Tuesday 26 November 2019 at Serle Court Chambers on “Practical advice on practice management, parental leave and wellbeing”. Our panel members included: Mr Justice Saini, Philippa Hopkins QC (Essex Court Chambers), Maria Frangeskides (Partner, Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe (UK) LLP) and Lucy Burrows (Deputy Senior Clerk, 4 Pump Court). This event was extremely well received by the approximately 40 attendees and it was really encouraging that actually more than half of the attendees were men (given the topic)! Our panelists were uniformly positive about the event.

Our fourth event was a joint Junior COMBAR/ JLSLA wine tasting event on Wednesday 26 February 2020. There were 81 attendees from a mixture of firms and chambers were present on the night (the venue’s maximum capacity was 80). The event sold out with about 111 tickets sold, with demand for more tickets right up to the event starting. Again, there was a lot of positive feedback received from both barristers and solicitors about the event.

We had planned to have a lecture by Professor Edwin Peel in March 2020 but this was frustrated by the Lockdown.

Our fifth and final event of the year to date was another joint seminar with the JSLA on Virtual Hearings on 14 May 2020. The panelists included myself, Charlotte Hill and Elizabeth Mason (Reed Smith LLP) on Virtual Hearings and we had over 230 people sign up the Zoom seminar.

**Kira King**

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