



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH  
Edinburgh Law School

# Newsletter

| Spring/Summer 2015 |



## Laying the foundations

Edinburgh Law School  
officially launches its  
Old College Campaign.

More on page 8.

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| Stellar REF results | Old College project update | Free Legal Advice Centre |

## Welcome

The first half of 2015 has been an exciting time for the Law School as we prepare for the refurbishment of our Old College home.

Staff members have been busy clearing out of offices so the north-west section of the building can be stripped out and prepared for the construction work that will begin in November.

It's all beginning to feel very real and we're delighted that we'll be able to see the results in 2018, two years sooner than first scheduled. You can read more about that on page 4.

We're also feeling very proud in 2015. Our Research Excellence Framework (REF) results, revealed at the end of last year, demonstrated just how much the research we do at the Law School makes a difference, and you can find out more about that opposite.

We have also risen in the rankings. We're now rated as one of the top 30 law schools in the world by the 2015 QS World University Rankings by Subject, and we acknowledge and thank the role of our impressive alumni community in enhancing our reputation around the world.



### Come back!

Did you know that University of Edinburgh alumni are entitled to a 10% discount on fees for postgraduate study?

If you're thinking of a return to study we have an impressive range of on-campus masters degrees on offer, from commercial law to criminal law or from international banking law to human rights.

And if you're not in a position to rejoin student life on campus you might be interested in one of our six LL.Ms by online distance learning, which can be studied from anywhere and at any time.

Find out more at: [www.law.ed.ac.uk/teaching/postgraduate](http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/teaching/postgraduate)

### What's on at the Law School

We host a lively programme of seminars, lectures and discussion and our alumni are very welcome to come back and take part. Most of our events are free and many are open to the public.

To keep up to date with the Law School events visit [www.law.ed.ac.uk/events](http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/events)

You can also find out more about any of the events listed by getting in touch at [law.events@ed.ac.uk](mailto:law.events@ed.ac.uk)

#### Here's a preview of what's coming up:

Date & Time	Event	Venue
2nd July 2015, 3pm to 6.30pm	<b>Seminar Celebrating the Work of Professor Martin Loughlin</b> To mark the conferral of an Honorary Doctorate on Professor Martin Loughlin by Edinburgh Law School.	Neil MacCormick Room, Edinburgh Law School, Old College.
3rd and 4th September 2015, 8.45am to 5.45pm (both days)	<b>Current issues in Freight Forwarding: Law and Logistics</b> Two-day conference hosted by the Edinburgh Centre for Commercial Law.	Dovecot Studios, 10 Infirmary Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1LT.



**“We are all to be congratulated on creating an amazingly dynamic research culture. . .”**

Professor Richard Sparks, Head of School

## **REF confirms Edinburgh Law School's status as research leader**

Edinburgh Law School has been ranked 1st in Scotland and 4th in the UK for the breadth and quality of its research, based on the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 results. The Law School had one of the largest law research submissions in the UK. More than three quarters (77%) of the School's research activity is rated as world leading or internationally excellent. The REF 2014 also places Edinburgh Law School 1st in the UK for the highest volume of 4\* rated research impact.

The Law School submitted six impact case studies, five of which were rated 4\*. This was one of the largest submissions for law research in the UK, which means that Edinburgh produces the highest volume of research impact that is considered world leading in terms of significance and rigour.

“The School has performed extremely well and we are all to be congratulated on creating an amazingly dynamic research culture and community, and producing impactful, meaningful research of world leading quality,” said Professor Richard Sparks, Head of School. “We'll be able to focus on taking forward these successes, continuing to identify, enable and foster a world-leading research environment and research impact in 2015.”

### **Making a difference**

Here's a small sample of the Law School research projects that have helped to influence society:

- **Understanding youth crime**

The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime (ESYTC), led by Professors Lesley McAra and Susan McVie, generated new understanding about youth offending and the impact of interventions leading directly to reform in youth policy and practice in Scotland.

- **Ensuring best health data practice**

Scottish Health Informatics Programme (SHIP)'s Good Governance Framework has helped to make sure that valuable patient data are linked effectively and in the public interest while ensuring patient privacy is protected.

- **Reforming land registration**

Extensive research by Professors Kenneth Reid and George Gretton contributed to the introduction of a new law of land registration achieved by the Land Registration etc (Scotland) Act 2012.

- **Stem cell research in Argentina**

Professor Graeme Laurie and Dr Shawn Harmon worked with the Argentinian Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovative Production (MOST) to help overcome state non-intervention in the regulation of regenerative medicine in Argentina.

For more information on the Law School's research visit [www.law.ed.ac.uk/research](http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/research)

## News

### ***New Law School building to open in 2018***

The Law School is to open its new building in 2018, two years earlier than originally scheduled. A change in the project's schedule means that the refurbished Old College building will be ready for teaching, working and study from January 2018. The new building will be launched officially with a series of events for staff, students and alumni, who will be very much included in what will be a significant moment in the Law School's history.

#### **New designs**

The new design will provide a contemporary and dynamic environment for teaching, research and study, while celebrating and highlighting the treasured heritage and history of its Old College quarters.

"One of the most important things for me," said Professor Lesley McAra, former Head of School, "is that students will be at the heart of the building, the social space will be at the hub of this building, and that for me is really, really important."

"And the other thing is that our Law Library is going to be linked to the school and in the school. The Law Library is the lifeblood of the School; it's where staff and students develop ideas."

#### **The project so far**

The beginning of the project to refurbish the Law School's Old College quarters was marked with a ceremony and procession through Edinburgh's Old Town last November, honouring the 225th anniversary of the laying of the Foundation Stone (you can view pictures of this on page 8). Work to prepare the north-west section of Old College for construction began at the end of March and the buildings works are scheduled to begin in November.

Originally work on the north side of Old College was to be carried out in three distinct phases, which meant that the completion date was previously scheduled for autumn 2020. These three phases have now been compressed into a single phase, accelerating this part of the Old College project to an earlier completion.

You can keep up to date with the project at [www.oldcollegeredevelopment.law.ed.ac.uk](http://www.oldcollegeredevelopment.law.ed.ac.uk)



A new entrance



Moot Court room



The Law Library

## Edinburgh Law School joins world's top 30



Edinburgh has been ranked as one of the world's top 30 law schools in the 2015 QS World University Rankings by Subject.

Edinburgh has climbed five places in the law rankings, from 32 to 27, and is one of only six UK universities to make the top 30. The QS Rankings seek to highlight the world's best universities based on academic reputation, employer reputation and research impact.

## Global Justice Academy awarded £4.4m DFID grant

The University's Global Justice Academy has been granted a multi-million pound research programme award to explore how countries affected by conflict can successfully and peacefully rebuild their societies.

The £4.4m research award from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) will look at how political settlements work in different countries and how they can be improved to include all citizens.

Christine Bell, Professor of Constitutional Law at Edinburgh Law School, will lead the global consortium, which also includes Conciliation Resources; the Rift Valley Institute in the UK, Kenya and South Sudan; the Transitional Justice Institute at Ulster University; and the Institute for Security Studies in South Africa.

"We are really honoured to have been awarded this programme and to be working with these partners," says Professor Bell. "We hope to harness the power and expertise of these organisations to address the critical dilemma at the heart of this programme: how to reconcile the need for agreement between political-military leaders if violent conflict is to end, with the need to meet people's broader inclusion, equality and justice demands if long-term peace and development is to be meaningful and sustained."

### News in brief

#### Best for feedback

Dr Lynne Copson has won the award for Best Feedback in the EUSA Teaching Awards 2015. Voted for by students, the EUSA Teaching Awards recognise innovative and inspiring teaching and highlight the many individual success stories across the University. Dr Copson teaches at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Law School teaching staff received 157 nominations in this year's awards, and Dr Euan MacDonald was named runner-up in the Best Personal Tutor award.

#### Professor Avgouleas leads Bank of England seminar

Professor Emiliios Avgouleas, Chair in International Banking Law and Finance has led a high level internal Bank of England seminar on bank resolution, following invitation by the Bank's Director of Financial Stability. Professor Avgouleas gave the keynote presentation followed by comment by Charles Goodhart, Norman Sosnow Professor Emeritus, LSE, and the Bank's director of resolution policy. A large number of Bank directors and senior staff from across the supervision, financial stability and resolution directorates attended the seminar.

#### Professor Tierney appointed to advise on the constitution

Stephen Tierney, Professor of Constitutional Theory at Edinburgh Law School and Director of the Edinburgh Centre for Constitutional Law, has been appointed Legal Adviser to the House of Lords Select Committee on the Constitution. Professor Tierney said: "This is a significant time for the constitution of both Scotland and the wider United Kingdom. It is very important that the current devolution settlement be submitted to detailed scrutiny in preparation for further constitutional change."

## Feature



### *Learning in the community*

We caught up with Rebecca MacKenzie, Director of the Edinburgh Centre for Professional Legal Studies, about how Edinburgh's Free Legal Advice Centre is helping law students gain practical experience while giving members of the public access to free legal services.

► *Why was the Free Legal Advice Centre created?*

Staff and students within Edinburgh Law School became increasingly aware that there were many in the community who needed legal advice and support, but were unable to afford the services of a solicitor or access legal services elsewhere. A number of enthusiastic students studying the Diploma in Legal Practice (now the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice), worked alongside the late Elaine Tyre (former Director of the Diploma), to develop and run the Centre out of the Legal Practice Unit in Old College.

From an educational perspective, students would also be provided with an opportunity to put their legal education and skills into practice.

**“ Access to the legal system should not depend on whether or not you can afford to pay a solicitor. ”**

► *How does the Free Legal Advice Centre operate?*

The Centre offers appointments every Monday evening during semester time. We can offer up to 10 appointments each week, but this will depend on the needs of the clients and the availability of students and volunteer solicitors. Every Diploma in Professional Legal Practice student will participate in the Centre during his or her course of study.

At the appointment evening, the student will conduct a fact-find interview and encourage the client to discuss the problem which has brought them to the Centre. Following the appointment, the student will then research the issue and write an advice letter to the client. It may be that we can help further, for example, write a letter to a third party on behalf of the client or seek further information from another party so that we can pursue matters. We have been very successful in negotiating settlements for our clients.

Additionally, since the end of 2014, students trained in advocacy and court procedure have been able to represent a number of clients in Small Claims Court actions.

► ***How does the Free Legal Advice Centre contribute towards the local community?***

Access to the legal system should not depend on whether or not you can afford to pay a solicitor. Unfortunately, this is becoming more apparent with cuts in legal aid and the diminishing number of solicitors who can offer legally aided assistance. With that in mind, we have a unique opportunity to do what we can to help ensure that we can make a difference and offer support to community groups, charities and individuals. Without our input, they may not receive any additional support.

► ***Why is pro bono work an important part of the legal profession?***

I am a great believer that pro bono work should be promoted as a professional value and students should be encouraged to develop a sense of duty to ensure access to justice, not just at university, but also throughout their professional career. Indeed, many of our volunteer solicitors were previously students at the University and they return to help because they want to remain involved and give something back to the community. Pro bono work helps to ensure that our legal system is accessible to all members of our community, regardless of their ability to afford a solicitor.

**“Students are able to put their legal education and skills into practice.”**

► ***In what ways does the Free Legal Advice Centre link with the teaching and training of law students?***

Put simply it is “learning by doing”. Students are able to put their legal education and skills into practice. They have the opportunity to interview clients; draft letters in a form that a client can easily understand; engage in and research live legal issues; negotiate settlements; manage their time and their own file appropriately; and conduct themselves always in a professional and ethical manner. These are real clients with real problems with whom students will have a professional relationship and be responsible for ensuring they receive the advice they need.

**“We have been very successful in negotiating settlements for our clients.”**

► ***In what ways do the students benefit from their involvement in the Free Legal Advice Centre?***

Other than the educational benefits, students are provided with opportunities to explore career options, develop professional contacts and become more involved in their communities.

Our students are very proud of the work that they do and their efforts were recognised at the LawWorks and Attorney General Student Awards in 2013 where they were highly commended in the category “Best Contribution by a Team of Students.”

Many students, after taking part in the Centre, will tell me that they felt a sense of personal satisfaction in providing a solution to their client. Some go further and say that it reminded them of why they decided to study law in the first place.

► ***How can people get involved?***

We are always looking for volunteer solicitors who can supervise at our appointment evenings or assist with another project, such as the Small Claims Service. If a firm, charity or individual would like to help, I would be delighted to hear from them and we can discuss how best they can become involved.



**Get involved**

If you'd like to get involved in the Centre you can find out how to do so at

[www.freelegaladvice.ed.ac.uk/get-involved](http://www.freelegaladvice.ed.ac.uk/get-involved)

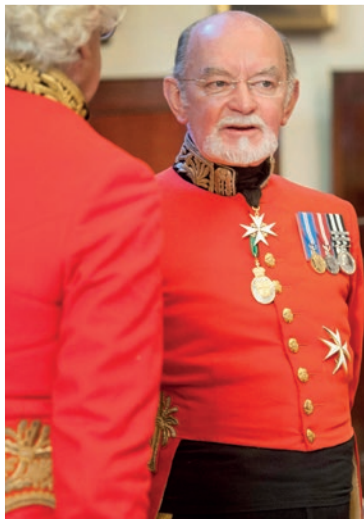
Or if you'd like to support the Centre visit

[www.freelegaladvice.ed.ac.uk/donate](http://www.freelegaladvice.ed.ac.uk/donate)

## Photo Story

### Launching the Future

In November 2014, Edinburgh Law School launched its Old College Campaign with a procession through the city's Old Town culminating in the grand unveiling of a commemorative stone at Old College to mark the beginning of its refurbishment project. The event recreated a procession carried out exactly 225 years prior to the launch to lay the original foundation stone for Old College.



**Top left:** Admiring the new stone with members of the Faculty of Advocates: Patricia Comiskey; Stuart Nicoll; Sir Crispin Agnew of Lochnaw, QC, Rothesay Herald of Arms in Ordinary; James Wolffe, QC, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates; Marian Gilmore QC; Joanna Cherry QC; **top centre:** Joseph Morrow, Lord Lyon King of Arms; **top right:** Led by a piper, the procession moves down George IV Bridge; **centre:** the procession enters the Lawnmarket; **bottom:** James Wolffe, QC, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates



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