



**legal education &
training group**



LETG Newsletter Winter 2006

"Another year drawing to a close...

This wintry edition includes, hot off the press, reports from the Legal Learning workshop and the E-learning forum, a free article from Sharon Green of Chiara Consulting, and days in the lives of both a regional LETG member and a trainer known to quite a few of us, Jane Walmsley. This is our last newsletter for the year – so savour with an early mince pie and we'll see you in the New Year." (ed.)

LETG News

A new Chair - farewell to Paula, welcome Pauline!

At the AGM, Paula McMullan, LETG Chair for the last year, bade farewell as she moves on to new career opportunities. She's presided over, among many things, a revamping of the LETG workshops and a membership drive.

Paula, in parting, says "I am very sorry to be leaving the LETG after just a year as Chair. Working with the Committee to increase the services offered to members has been a real challenge which is really starting to pay off and I know that Pauline has lots of ideas for maintaining the momentum. I have been very touched by the kind messages of support I have received and I look forward to staying in touch with the LETG in the future. I wish you all every success."

Paula is moving into learning and development consultancy as one half of the McMullan Partnership, offering training in business and trainer skills and corporate wellness.

We are delighted that Pauline Holland of Clyde & Co has now taken the helm of a vibrant and active LETG. Pauline has served on the LETG committee for several years in various capacities, including secretary and has had responsibility for the organisation of the Training Fair and 9th Annual Conference.

"I'm delighted," says Pauline, "to have been appointed. Paula and Patrick have done some really sterling work to get us off to a flying start over the last year and I look forward to leading an even more invigorated LETG. I hope to talk to a fair few of you at the Annual Conference next week. Watch this space for what we plan in 2007! If you have any great ideas and thoughts for what you'd like to see from the LETG, please do drop me a line or collar me, or any other member of the committee, at the Conference. You'll also have the opportunity to air your views at the Conference Dinner."

And adieu to Katharine...

Another fond farewell, this time to Katharine Greenfield of Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Mawe who is stepping down from the LETG committee after serving for 6 years! More

recently acting as the membership secretary, her contributions have been much valued by us all and we'll miss her equine tales!

Law Society latest



Want your voice heard on the proposed Training Framework changes? Apply for a place on the new Law Society Education & Training Committee

As Paula mentioned in the last newsletter, the Regulation Board has decided to refresh the composition of its committees, including the ETC, to ensure that an adequate breadth of experience is represented from all stakeholders in the regulation of the profession.

No special interest or representative group will have a place in its own right on the ETC, including the LETG.

Did you know that LETG members provide 50% of training opportunities throughout the country?

The ETC Chair, in recognition of this, hopes that at least one place on the new ETC may be allocated to someone working within a law firm member of the LETG, albeit as an individual rather than a member of the LETG.

*****The LETG Committee is, therefore, very keen to hear from anyone who is interested in standing for the ETC.*****

The post will be for three years (with an option to extend), with nine half-day meetings scheduled in 2007. We understand that members will be remunerated for their time, although this does not happen currently. Although ETC proceedings are often confidential, the Committee would invite the ETC member to update them, whenever appropriate.

Please email Jane Cochrane (cochrane.jane@googlemail.com) if you are

thinking of standing and are happy to coordinate with the LETG Committee.

Formal applications for ETC positions will be publicised shortly.



STOP PRESS! Law Society of Scotland undertakes education consultation

In a similar vein to what has been happening in the Law Society for England and Wales, the BBC are covering the launch of the largest ever research and evidence gathering exercise undertaken by the Law Society of Scotland.

All interested parties (from students to partners, clients to legal academics) are being asked to contribute to and shape the future plans of the Society in relation to how solicitors are trained. Sound familiar?!

Here's a link to BBC coverage of the launch: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/6130868.stm>

The consultation will cover a range of routes to qualification (from full-time and part-time LLBs to the Society's exams) that can take from five to seven years as well as examining the full practising life of a solicitor and issues such as mandatory CPD. For further details, go to: <http://www.lawscot.org.uk/training/consult>. The consultation runs from November to February.

Articles

"What makes lawyers so different? Or are they...?"

chiaraconsulting

Some of you will know Sharon Green, ex-committee member who has now set up her own HR and Development consultancy, Chiara Consulting. Have a look at her article, **"What makes lawyers so different? Or are they..."** at the back of this newsletter (it's also on the [website](#)) – it explores a comparison between lawyers and other professional service firms.

LETG Member sharing

Good trainers used recently by LETG members

Are there any trainers YOU'VE used lately that have really impressed you? Let [Karen](#) know and we'll give them the praise deserved in this newsletter

Recent events report

Leading Legal Learning Workshop, 27 September

Where else will you find a bumper crowd, a sparkly building, and a Westland helicopter!



100-odd attendees had a fascinating afternoon at the new College of Law centre at Moorgate. We began with a panel session led by **Prof. Scott Slorach, College of Law**, at which the usual unsatisfactory conversation between training professional and a partner who knows "all about" training (but little about learning) was role-played with panache by Scott and **Patricia McKeller, E-Learning advisor at University of Warwick**. This led into an interesting panel discussion at which **Dr Henry Marsden of Kingston Jones** gave a brief overview of how people learn and how lawyers take on board information.

Two case studies followed, led by **Ben Staveley of Freshfields** who took us through the rich variety of Freshfields legal training from trainee to partnership level, and by **Des Woods, Head of Learning & Development at Linklaters**. Des talked about the Linklaters' Investment Funds Training and the video streaming that has been put in place to assist learning across different time zones, jurisdictions and levels of experience. This will soon lead to over 1,000 e-seminars being available to learners in this area.

Following lunch and some very rapid tours of the College of Law's state of the art building,

the afternoon continued with a choice of 5 different workshops covering subjects from "Cross-Department Technical Training" to "Delivering Dry Law to Busy Clients". These were highly participative sessions and the accounts were gathered together by facilitators and are available [on our website](#).

We finished with two law firm case studies. **Jane Hobson of Baker & McKenzie** addressed how a global firm delivers training on a cross-cultural basis. **Joanne Gubbay of Ashursts** concluded with a very interesting presentation on how Ashursts delivers legal training to clients as part of business development. Attendees were then able to discuss the many ideas buzzing in their heads over a glass of wine kindly provided by the College of Law. This was a full and fascinating programme, only interrupted briefly by the arrival and departure of a Westland helicopter on the Royal Artillery ground next door!

We thank Patrick McCann for his organisation, the College of Law for hosting us, and all our speakers and workshop leaders for their input.

Contributed by Susan Way, Shoosmiths

E-learning Forum, 23 October



From A (Anti-Money Laundering), through LMS, to Z (actually S for Simulations) and a smart gift to boot.

Robin Henry, LETG Committee member, hosted a fascinating workshop at Simmons & Simmons on the possibilities for e-learning in our firms.

The afternoon began with two presentations by professional firms in the e-learning environment; **Matthew Underwood of Intellego** on "What E-Learning has to offer law firms" and **Howard Finger of VinciWorks** on "The future of compliance training via e-learning".

Matthew explained how Intellego offers both to design and build rapid e-learning content and to deliver and manage training solutions. Their specialities include simulation-based e-learning and documentation for complex business rollouts such as training on a new DMS system, regulatory compliance, business process and procedural change, e.g. induction of new staff. Howard then spoke of the Anti Money Laundering (or AML) packages that he has successfully introduced in a number of the City firms. Howard's gloomy prediction is that AML compliance will get worse before it gets better, but he commented that compliance is moving away from merely ticking the box. Future AML e-learning will centre around the delivery of "just-in-time" training to people's desktops (such solutions already exist in the banking environment).

Pip Johnston of Tutorpro followed with a talk on learning management systems (LMS) and blended learning. Tutorpro's LMS include automatic training needs analyses, remote testing before and after each course, and easy distribution of course materials. The aim of a good LMS is to bring all learning together so that a fee-earner (or anyone else) can see what training is planned, when it is available, what s/he has already completed or started, and what there is still left to do. The system is capable of co-ordinating any type of training, whether on-line, external or internal, lunchtime sessions, tracking CPD, availability of DVDs and much more.

The workshop continued with two law firm case studies led by **Claire Lines of Lovells** and **Ann Hemming of Hugh James Solicitors**. Claire is Lovell's Legal and IT Training Manager and explained how she had developed e-learning for the firm - a necessity given that Lovells has over 3,000 people working from 26 offices worldwide. She passed on useful tips, from the absolute need to recruit people to the cause who had a genuine interest in a new development, to getting consultants to advise on the creation of in-house templates, styles and language. It is also helpful to look at some of the excellent examples of e-learning around, such as the DWP and the Department of Health.

Ann gave us some examples of the e-learning programme at Hugh James, a 600-strong firm with three offices. The firm needed to improve its overall IT skills in the face of changes in the staff profile. E-learning provided a solution to the problem of assisting

learning from a small training function with no dedicated training premises, where fee-earners were unwilling to release staff for off-site training. Although no one product ticked all the boxes, Hugh James had been able to develop some excellent e-learning using enthusiastic staff, trained by professional actors in how to do excellent presentations. The skills involved were quite different from those needed to deliver more traditional training of the lecture variety. The unexpected results of the e-learning programme were much better team-working, an increase in expectations across the firm and a big increase in demand for communications skills training.

After Intellego, VinciWorks and Tutorpro gave short demonstrations of their products, the afternoon finished with an energetic panel discussion chaired by **Des Woods of Linklaters**, on ways to start off e-learning in a firm. The many attendees left buzzing with new ideas and also a very acceptable gift from the LETG - to display proudly on their desks as they too get down to some e-learning?

Contributed by Susan Way, Shoosmiths

LETG Annual General Meeting, 23 October



A busy and productive LETG year, and a flying visit from the new Solicitors' Regulation Authority...

Paula McMullan, as outgoing Chair, gave her report on activities for the year. There has been much afoot and **her full report can be seen at the end of this newsletter.**

We were also joined by **Hilary Lloyd, Acting Director of Regulation Standards at the new Solicitors' Regulation Authority** (formed following the split of the Law Society's representational and regulatory functions). Hilary gave us an update on a range of issues, including useful information about the SRA, and the training framework proposals.

A healthy and robust (!) debate took place between those present and Hilary on the practical implications of some of the proposed aspects of the new training framework. A small selection of highlights:

- There will be a pilot of the new Work Based Learning programme in autumn 2007, which will run until 2009. Evaluation is due during 2009-10, with implementation planned in 2010.
- Consultants will look at the Day 1 outcomes, with focus groups inputting into this over next 3 months.
- Introducing LPC III from September 2007.

**Gastronosh, 23 October
Small, but sweet, gathering in Pizza
Express, London Wall**



After the AGM, a select band of LETG committee and member revellers enjoyed a pizza and a drink at the Pizza Express, where topics on the agenda went from horse-riding and Level 4 Kirkpatrick evaluation, to seeking to implement a CPD requirement higher than the Law Society's.

Gastronosh events are certainly a great way to exchange thoughts and ideas, and generally have fun with other LETG members in a relaxed environment; getting to know new faces and share frustrations is a great opportunity that the LETG can afford you.

We look forward to seeing some more new faces in the New Year at these, and our other, events.

Events for your diary

**The Annual Conference 2006
"Delivering Development....with
Distinction"**

**15 & 16 November, Aston Business
School, Birmingham**

You've been booking in droves – we now have 80 or so members registered to attend what promises to be a fantastic Annual conference in Birmingham.



Not only do you have an excuse to visit the iconic Selfridges building in Birmingham (see above - Brum is also home to a Harvey Nichols, for serious shoppers), but you get two days of real training value for you to take back to your training departments across the UK and Ireland.

We're looking forward to seeing you all there next week, and hope you'll enjoy the great variety of sessions on offer; need we remind you, there are some great contributors, including Adrian Moorhouse, Alan Hodgart, The College of Law, KSB, Mission Excellence, The Training Shop, and the University of Strathclyde, and 15 law firm session leaders. If you haven't already booked, click [here](#) to go to the website for more programme and booking details.

Your input needed

**LETG 2007 – What do you want from
the LETG next year?**

The Committee will be having its away day in early December when we will agree our strategic priorities for 2007. To help inform our discussion, **please let us have your ideas as to what you want the LETG to do for you over the next year.** In particular, what are your views on:

- What should be the LETG's top 2 priorities over the next 12-18 months?
- What are the challenges in relation to education and learning in your law firm, and who you think might have some of the answers
- Who you would like to share their ideas with the LETG

- What workshop topics should we be running in 2007, who should be running them and who can help?
- What speakers or topics should be included at next year's conference?
- What should the LETG do differently?
- What should the LETG be getting its members to do?
- How can the LETG best knowledge share?
- What should the LETG be lobbying on, who and why?
- What do you think of our decision to stop the LETG commercial friend category?

Replies to [Karen Aubrey](#) by 4 December.

New Legal Secretary/Paralegal Competency Benchmarks Working Party – get involved!



Does your firm employ paralegals? Do you proactively use legal secretaries? How do you benchmark their competence?

The Institute of Paralegals seeks law firm members of their new Legal Secretary/Paralegal Competency Benchmarks Working Party.

The project is being run by the Institute in partnership with the Council for Administration (the UK's premier standard setting body for business and administration) and Edexcel (the UK's largest national awarding body).

We'd like to positively encourage LETG members who are interested in benchmarking their legal secretaries' and paralegals' competence to get involved.

Please see the **further information attached to the back of this newsletter**, or contact directly [James O'Connell](#), Chief Executive of the Institute of Paralegals.

This issue's "Member in the spotlight"!



Ann Hemming of Hugh James, offices throughout Wales

Current role: Director of Training and Knowledge Management. I have been with Hugh James for 5 years now but the training side became my responsibility 2 years ago. However at the end of the year I will be leaving to work for Lexis with responsibility for developing e-learning products and helping to develop KM solutions.



How long have you been an LETG member? Not long enough! I joined about a year ago; it has been really helpful to hear from colleagues.

Typical day: What's that! My day is a mix of organising and procuring training as well as managing our information department; I also run training sessions myself. I am responsible for cajoling, bullying and coercing staff into attending training. I am helped by an excellent team of IT trainers and staff who help me to organise sessions and develop our e-learning materials.

What's your office like? The office is lovely, it's very modern and in the middle of Cardiff which is a great city. The main problem is our air conditioning which is totally temperamental and means we all need 3 different outfits at work. We have around 300 staff in the Cardiff office and a range of conference rooms. I work in an open plan area near the conference suite.

How many in your team? 4 altogether, for both the KM and training functions.

Biggest challenges? Developing our portfolio of management skills training and making sure lawyers appreciate the importance of management training.

Greatest triumphs? Getting my MBA - I never want to go through that again.

Any training room nightmares? Millions of nightmares. Recently we organised a webinar for around 50 lawyers in different offices and 2 minutes after it had started the computer died completely.

If you had a magic wand, what would you make happen? I'd be 20 years younger but know what I know now.

If you could be anywhere in the world, where would you be? In Taormina, Sicily, at a restaurant overlooking the Med and Mount Etna, with a gin & tonic in my hand.

Person you'd call in an emergency? For emergencies at work then I call one of the partners, Colin who is the most knowledgeable person I know and an excellent trainer with a great sense of humour.

Favourite training provider? Difficult to answer I have so many, but I work closely with Adrienne O'Sullivan of the company Act Now, she is a professional actress and trainer in presentation skills and she has transformed my lawyers into excellent presenters.

One word of advice to new members? Bribery (it works).

Any help you'd like from providers? I think all providers ought to provide training in a number of different formats. Classroom training has to be the most difficult to organise, it would be so much better if we could always have the choice of a range of formats- (and that all e-learning was compatible with LMS systems).

If the LETG could do one thing for you, what would it be?

Id like to ask for help with a project I am involved in at the moment. Kevin Connell (who used to be IT Director at Masons, and is now an Information Director looking after the IT functions for BP's legal services) is arranging a fund raising trek on the Great Wall of China in September next year, in order to raise funds for the National Autism society in general, and the school his son attends in

particular. I will be taking part in the challenge as a way of "celebrating" reaching my half century.

<http://www.trekchina0907.org.uk/>

The aims of the trek are to:

- raise awareness of the challenges faced by children with autism
- build friendships with others on the trek and establish links with the Fortune Training School (XinYun School) in Beijing
- raise funds for both Newick House School, West Sussex (a UK school for children with special needs) and The National Autistic Society

I'd like to invite anyone in LETG who fancies a challenge to think about joining the trek or helping with sponsorship.

A day in a trainer's life!

Jane Walmsley, trainer and consultant



How long have you been a trainer? 19 years.

What did you do in your previous life? A degree in Ancient History and Classical Archaeology. Then, in the autumn after I graduated, a short stint in the Civil Service processing error corrections on their newly-introduced computer systems (v. boring!) before training as a trainer, with the Civil Service again. After working in the Civil Service for three years, I worked for a major high street retailer and then a management consultancy before taking the role of Assistant Training Manager with the Norton Rose M5 Group. I've been training solicitors now for 16 years.

Main topics you train?

Presentation skills, negotiation skills and PSC Electives.

A typical day?

Tends to involve long journeys and quite a lot of talking! I'll leave home between 6.30 and

7.30am, depending on whether I'm taking the train to London or driving somewhere else. I tend to arrive at whichever firm I'm working with that day at 9.30-10.00am (unless the train or the traffic's been particularly bad) and then it's straight into running a course. They're usually full-day courses, combining discussion and exercises with feedback. We'll have a couple of short coffee breaks and about 45 minutes for lunch. There'll be time to catch up with my client either before or after the course, or both, before the journey home again, hopefully in time to collect my son from any evening activity he might have been to or to help with homework. Then, it's e-mails and preparation for the next day of training or coaching.

Biggest training challenges in your field?

Getting people to turn their Blackberries off!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Increasingly, a lack of time. This has always been an issue in my experience, however, it seems to me to be becoming more so. I sense an increasing reluctance to give time to examining and developing how we do what we do rather than simply getting on with the next task. Then, when someone has taken (or been given) time to attend some training, it's not uncommon for them to be interrupted by e-mails, phone calls and even people coming to the meeting room and calling them away. I think that this is much more apparent now than even two years ago. Linked to lack of time, another challenge is getting people to identify how they can apply generic skills and approaches to their own particular area of work. It seems to me that, as well as having extremely heavy workloads, solicitors are becoming so specialist so early in their careers now that they struggle to see how generic skills and approaches can be relevant to them if they're not delivered via a case study or exercise that's specifically rooted in, for example, environmental law or property litigation or employment or family work, etc.

Greatest triumphs?

My son.

As far as work is concerned, I don't know that I would describe myself as having had any great triumphs. I do what I do as best I can and hope that it's helpful to as many people as possible. Now that I think about it, though, being nominated for the LETG Trainer of the Year Award, for the last two years now, I think, has been pretty good – I'm really flattered.

Training room nightmares?

Those Blackberries again!

No natural light, sluggish or hyperactive air conditioning, flipchart pens which don't work, too much unnecessary kit getting in the way, room too big or too small for the number of people there, lots of probably very expensive art on the walls which leaves little room for flipchart papers.

Occasionally, there are people who will say that they don't want to be there but they've been sent and don't see what they can get out of the session. Oh, and one delegate, a couple of years ago, who was Managing Partner of his own small firm, who liked the sound of his own voice and who had adopted, so it seemed from his descriptions, some pretty sexist and discriminatory recruitment and HR policies. He was a bit tricky to manage.

Your perfect training room venue?

The opposite of what I listed above – I'm very low maintenance!

What would a perfect law firm client look like?

All my clients are good!

Any secret habits/interests?

I don't think it's much of a secret among the clients I work with regularly – I'm a bit of a yogi. I practise Ashtanga yoga which keeps me fit and my stress levels well-managed.

If you weren't a trainer, what would you be?

As well as being a trainer, I'm also a commercial mediator so I'd be doing that.

If I didn't have to earn a living, though, I'd probably be a permanent student starting with Byzantine history, going on to the history of the Reformation, maybe the politics of the Tudor period, art history..... I'm saving all of this for my retirement.

Want more from this newsletter?

Contact [Karen Aubrey](#).

Your LETG committee

Paula McMullan, Outgoing Chair, Annual
Dinner, Law Society ETC

Pauline Holland, New Chair, Annual Dinner,
Law Society ETC

Patrick McCann, Vice-Chair, Annual conference

Peter Carrick, Website development

Sandy Boyle, Treasurer

Karen Aubrey, Newsletter

Susan Way, Regions

Robin Henry, E learning forum

Jenny Pugh, Website development

Tracy Clegg

Shannon Campbell

Jane Cochrane, LETG Administrator

www.letg.org.uk

LETG Newsletter Article: What makes lawyers so different? Or are they.....

Some of you may know my name from the eight years I spent working in law firms, firstly at Nabarro Nathanson and, for the last six years, as Head of Training and Development at Stephenson Harwood. I left SH to set up *Chiara Consulting* and interestingly the client assignments I have undertaken recently have been outside of the law.

When I first joined a law firm a partner quizzed me about my background. 'Are you a lawyer?' 'No. My background has always been in people management and development' I replied. Actually I said I was a trainer, it sounded simpler. I then told him I had spent a long time, over seven years, working with doctors who I felt were very similar. The partner concerned felt that I was mistaken, lawyers are different, and indeed eight years of experience later perhaps I could see his point.

So when I first pitched for work at an engineering consultancy firm, I did not draw any parallels between working with engineers and working with lawyers. Did you know engineering consultants charge for their time and are considering how to manage e-time recording? I certainly didn't. They too have to rise to the challenge of maintaining their professional, technical expertise alongside the increasing expectations of managing people, teams, finances, projects and clients. They have to consider the issues of risk management and want to know how to best approach clients when a project changes in scope halfway through. They wonder what the key is to successful business development and consider how to differentiate themselves and their business from competitor companies that seem to be selling a similar service. Does this all sound familiar? I have to say, I **assumed** that their people management issues would be different and was quickly reminded of the phrase "never assume, it makes an **ass** of **u** and **me**".

In fact, as you can see by these examples, this UK and Ireland based arm of a global multinational has surprisingly similar challenges to those I encountered in law and to the ones I discussed with colleagues at past LETG conferences or networking events. It got me thinking back to my work with doctors and the challenges they faced in taking on management duties when they entered the profession for a whole host of other, probably unconnected, reasons.

Okay they are working in different organisational context and business sectors, yet there are connections. I have found it personally comforting to discover that the challenges of people management and development span different settings. I guess that is what makes our roles so interesting and perhaps, on a bad day, frustrating.

For me it also shows that as learning and development professionals there are great opportunities to learn from other sectors and the experiences of other professional groups. By doing that training managers are in an excellent position to apply lessons learned or new ideas to the specific context of partnerships and to the different aspects of working with lawyers.

Sharon Green, HR & development consultant, sharon.green@chiara-consulting.com.



Annual General Meeting 2005/2006

held at Simmons & Simmons, 1 Ropemaker Street, London EC2Y 9SS
on Monday, 23 October 2006

Chair's Report

The four key functions of the LETG are to:

- to provide networking opportunities
- to facilitate knowledge sharing
- to support and train the learning & development professional
- to act as a think tank and pressure group on behalf of member firms on all learning and professional development issues.

The Committee has worked very hard this year towards each of these goals, with a ramping up of activities on all fronts.

A breakdown of all LETG events and initiatives in 2005/2006 is set out below.

The Group exists for the benefit of its members and ideas generated by the members are essential for it to continue to provide the services for which it was set up. The Committee thanks all those of you who have participated in LETG events over the past year and for making them the success that they have been. We look forward to welcoming you back for more in 2006/2007.

Chair

LETG Review of the Year 2005/2006

Membership

The Committee members carried out a membership drive in May/June 2006 with a view to increasing law firm members and publicising the LETG more widely. Our efforts have met with success. We offered free membership until September 2006 and we are now hoping that the trial period will encourage the new members to sign up for full membership.

	2005	2006
Individual members	191	221 11.5% increase
Law firm members with more than 30 partners	77	81
Law firm members with fewer than 30 partners	13	14
Number of training contracts offered by LETG members	-	2406

The Committee

Comings & Goings

Leavers

John Trimbos
Gill Whensley
Elspeth Anderson
Sharon Green

Joiners

Jenny Pugh, Slaughter & May
Robin Henry, Simmons & Simmons
Tracy Clegg, Charles Russell
Shannon Campbell, DLA Piper Rudnick

Stepping down at the AGM

Katharine Greenfield Paula McMullan

Committee for 2006/2007

Pauline Holland	Chair	Robin Henry
Patrick McCann	Vice Chair	Tracy Clegg
Sandy Boyle	Treasurer	Shannon Campbell
Peter Carrick	Website	
Karen Aubrey	Newsletter	
Susan Way	Regional initiatives	
Jenny Pugh	Website	

Representation to the Law Society

- Through the monthly Education & Training Committee meetings, the LETG Chair reports back to the Committee on any relevant business.
- The LETG was invited to a Focus Group meeting with Dr Jonathan Spencer, Chair of the ETC, and Hilary Lloyd, Acting Director for Regulation Standards on 21 September 2006 to discuss initial responses to the work-based learning consultation paper.
 - The Focus Group comprised law firms whose profile represented the LETG membership.

Workshops

After a slow-down in the number of interesting workshops proposed by training providers, the Committee decided to turn the focus of the half-day workshops to increasing the knowledge and skills of LETG members, rather than giving the opportunity to trainers to showcase their product.

How training functions can add more value	Tony Reiss, Lumina Consulting	October 2005	12 attendees
Facilitation Skills for Trainers	Isobel Heaton, DTC International	February 2006	16 attendees
Networking for Trainers	Will Kintish	April 2006	15 attendees
Training your Trainees		June 2006	103 attendees
Leading Legal Learning		September 2006	120 attendees

Networking Events

Gastronosh - 12th January - Costa Dorada - 20 diners

Gastronosh - 27th April - Konaki - 21 diners

Annual Dinner - 27 June - swissotel Howard - 70 diners

Annual Conference

Maximising the Effectiveness of your Training and Development Programme

November 2005 at the Solihull Renaissance

106 delegates

Training Fair

January 2006 at the Mermaid Conference Centre

27 exhibitors

Feedback from exhibitors and attendees has suggested that we would be best to wait until mid-2007 before considering another training fair. It may be wise to invite exhibitors who do not already provide training to law firms to encourage a wider range of offerings.

Initiatives for 2006

Regional LETG groups

- **Midlands**, Sharon Bancroft of Eversheds has been very proactive in setting up a Midlands regional group which met recently. Sharon is intending to drum up more support at the conference where she is running a breakout session.
- **North-West**, (Liverpool, Leeds), Jan Springthorpe of Thompsons is also running a breakout session at the conference to see if there is sufficient interest in a NW group.
- There does not seem to be enough support in the **South-West** to run a group, despite interest from a couple of people.
- Interest in a **South** regional group has been expressed and we are following up to see if there are sufficient numbers to support a group.

Improve communications with the members

- Newsletter published every two months
- Re-launched website

Review of membership categories

- The category of Commercial Friend has been suspended for the time being following feedback from law firm members. This is a topic for discussion at the Committee away day in December.

Challenges for 2007

- To continue to lobby the Solicitors' Regulatory Authority in the formulation of the work-based learning entry into the profession and associated projects e.g., CPD and QLTT.
 - To encourage members to apply for ETC positions
 - To encourage law firm members to take part in the WBL pilot starting summer 2007
- The focus of the LETG – should we emphasis more the “L” of learning?



National Competency Benchmarks for Legal Secretaries and Paralegals: Invitation to Join Working Party (NB: Minor Time Commitment!)

The Institute is working with the Council for Administration (the UK's premier standards setting body for business and administration) and Edexcel (the UK's largest national awarding body) to create competency benchmarks for legal secretaries and paralegals. The Society's Lexcel team has welcomed the project as supporting those firms wanting to professionalise their support staff. The LETG also supports the project.

We invite your firm to join the working party as we appreciate that the benchmarks must reflect your needs if they are to be of any use to you. We will keep your time commitment to a minimum. If we can, we will avoid the need for any meetings at all. We currently envisage two versions of the benchmarks to cover the differing requirements of larger/smaller firms. That said, as the requirements of firms will determine the benchmarks we do not want to pre-guess the outcome.

The benchmarks are intended to assist firms with creating a career structure for legal secretaries and paralegals; agreeing what knowledge, skills, aptitudes, tasks, job titles, qualifications and risk/compliance obligations (if any) are required at each level. The career structure will also encompass career/personal development plans and assist with the easy identification of a coherent personal training plan.

Although intended to be of more immediate practical use than National Occupational Standards, the competency benchmarks will map against any relevant NOS.

We feel this initiative to be long overdue. Without agreed competency benchmarks it is impossible to differentiate between levels of seniority and responsibility, introduce long-term training goals or assess competence. At the very least, the benchmarks will help develop a nationally agreed rudimentary career progression for legal secretaries and paralegals.

We are also discussing the benchmarks with legal recruitment firms to ensure that they are aware of the project.

For more information please telephone James O'Connell on 020 7887 1420 or email him at joconnell@InstituteofParalegals.org