

Following a number of weeks observing *Operation Lytton*, my first six was flying by at a frenetic pace, and suddenly it was time for me to take a trip “off circuit” for some advocacy training at Middle Temple.

I had obtained pupillage two years prior to starting, in 2021 (which was also the year I had finished Bar school), and in the interim I had spent the majority of my time working in law reform. This meant that whilst I was “in the thick of it” in terms of working in the legal sector, it was a different world to that of bail applications, sentencing hearings, and examinations-in-chief.

With this in mind, it was a welcome change of pace to once again step back into that world. Prior to the advocacy course starting, all students received a large bundle of documents covering different fictional cases, each requiring a different approach in terms of preparation. This in itself was a useful exercise to undertake, requiring each course attendee to balance different fact patterns and “instructions”, making sure all cases were prepared comprehensively and fully for the advocacy sessions throughout the week.

Each session was comprised of a number of small groups, with students presenting directly to one of the trainers. There is something particularly strange about “performing” in this way in a small room full of your peers – and the trainers who were often judges and/or KCs themselves! – but it was very useful in order to “get over” the initial hesitations and any lingering feelings of being self-conscious when undertaking such exercises.

The training was also a reminder that life at the Bar is comprised of many different moving parts. Whilst those who are new to – or only considering a career at – the Bar might focus, understandably, on the importance of advocacy, there is much more to it than that. Topics such as self-employed financial management, ethics training, and the relationship with your clerks, are all fundamental building blocks that must be understood to ensure you build a successful practice.

As is becoming a consistent theme, the week was over as soon as it had started, and I was making my way back up north to the sunny climes of Manchester, straight back into court on *Operation Lytton*. Thankfully (although not for the juror!) due to a minor bout of juror sickness the trial had been paused, so I had fortunately not missed a huge amount.

When things started up again, the trial moved on to the examination-in-chief and cross-examination of several police officers. Trials are comprised of all different types of witnesses, and recognising that different people require different approaches when it comes to eliciting information from them is one of the key skills all barristers should possess. A vulnerable complainant might require a much more delicate approach than a police officer who is simply there to confirm facts about the investigation process. But in either case, the right tool for the job must be selected, in order to do what you are there to do: put your client’s case forward as best as you are able.

As the weeks passed, the consistent and prevailing feeling was one of greater understanding. Although every day involved a new issue to grapple with, or a different

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obstacle to overcome, it was heartening to recognise that due to the excellent guidance and training from my pupil supervisor and other members of Chambers who generously gave up their time for me, I was becoming more competent when it came to understanding the ins-and-outs of those same issues and obstacles. The learning curve continued – and continues – upwards, but with each passing day it was becoming a little bit easier to navigate.