



Fifth Annual British Irish Commercial Law Forum

The 2016 BICBA Annual Conference was held in Belfast on 21 and 22 April 2016, in association with Grant Thornton LLP.

The venue for the Conference was the Inn of Court, Belfast and the theme was "Technology and the Law".

The Conference comprised three sessions on the following topics:-

1. Technology in the Courtroom;
2. Technology in the Litigation process;
3. Technology as a generator of substantive rights;

In line with the theme of the Conference, this was the first BICBA Conference to have its own App, which provided each delegate with details of all other delegates, speakers, presentations and our social itinerary.

The Conference also received widespread publicity in the Irish News, Belfast Telegraph, the Newsletter, Irish Legal News and it is intended to further promote the success of the Conference in several other publications.

The Conference was opened by Brett Lockhart QC who welcomed the delegates to Northern Ireland's first BICBA Annual Conference and Craig Connal QC of Pinsent Masons LLP, who gave a moving tribute to Lord Jones who sadly passed away recently. Lord Jones had been a keen supporter of BICBA and was due to speak at the Belfast Conference.

The first session was chaired by Mr Justice Deeny, the Commercial List Judge of the High Court of Northern Ireland.

A presentation on the use of technology in the Courtroom was given by Lord Kerr, Justice of the Supreme Court. Lord Kerr provided an insight into the technology used by the UK Supreme Court and presented a video demonstrating his daily application and use of technology.

Lord Justice Gillen gave an in depth analysis of his on going review of Civil & Family Justice in Northern Ireland. Lord Justice Gillen's innovative proposals included online Courts which was widely reported in the local media.

Sheriff Alayne Swanson set out a comprehensive view from the Scottish jurisdiction of IT developments within the Scottish Court system.

The second session was chaired by Mr Justice Peter Kelly, the President of the High Court of Ireland.

Our sponsors, Grant Thornton LLP gave a presentation on E-discovery. Andrew Harbison provided a detailed review of the latest technology and Artificial Intelligence available to practitioners and gave a fascinating insight into the sheer volume of documentation which can be readily analysed whilst also highlighting the problems which continue to exist with, for example, audio, video and foreign language materials.

Mr Justice Norris provided a robust and impressive retort to those practitioners who consider digitisation to be a panacea and examined the very real and practical difficulties which the legal profession and the legal system will face when seeking to accommodate technological advances.

Mr Richard Coghlin BL provided a historical overview of the tension between the oral tradition and the introduction of the requirement for documentary evidence, together with some timely lessons which can be applied to the on going debate about the role of technology in the litigation process.

The final session was hosted by Mr Justice Stephens and included a presentation on technology litigation by David McIlwaine of Pinsent Masons LLP. Mr McIlwaine's presentation included a case study on the recent high profile case of *The Secretary of State for the Home Department v Raytheon Systems Ltd* [2015] EWHC 311 (TCC).

The final representation was given by Peter Hopkins BL in relation to Data Protection and Privacy and developing case law in these areas, demonstrating the evolving rights and obligations of private individuals and internet service providers.

David Casement QC concluded the conference with closing remarks setting out his vision for the future of BICBA and highlighting the great success already achieved by the Association.

The delegates then attended a Gala Dinner at the Parliament Buildings in Stormont. The dinner was sponsored by the Minister for Justice, David Ford MLA.

Lord Neuberger, President of the UK Supreme Court gave the keynote address which explored the use of cameras in the Courtroom, as well as video link technology, online Dispute Resolution and Data Protection Rights.

The following day, delegates were afforded the opportunity to conduct a tour of Belfast and the Titanic Belfast building. The Belfast Harbour Commissioners then kindly hosted a luncheon at their headquarters, at which delegates were given the opportunity to meet with members of the BHC Executive Team.

The Conference was brought to a close at a dinner with guest of honour, Mr Justice Deeny at Tedfords Restaurant.