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M & S PROFILE: Nick Parsons

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The new president of FOIL on career challenges & dancing babies

Nick Parsons heads the insurance and public risk department at [Browne Jacobson](#), having qualified as a solicitor at the firm, becoming partner in 1994. At FOIL he moves up from vice president and succeeds [David Johnson](#), large loss litigation specialist at [Weightmans](#).



What was your route into the profession?

I was an arts student doing Medieval and Modern History and really had no idea what I wanted to do as a career. I flirted with the idea of becoming a graduate trainee manager with the NHS but ultimately was influenced by a then girlfriend (also an arts student) to try my hand at the Common Professional Examination. With very little research or planning I found myself at Trent Law School, and subsequently a training contract with Browne Jacobson, where I have spent my whole career. When I look back it was one of the biggest slices of luck I have had in my life.

What has been your biggest career challenge so far?

I am a personal injury and clinical negligence lawyer working particularly for local authorities and the NHS. I have been fortunate to act in a significant number of high profile and complex child abuse claims and public inquiries. These can be very challenging types of work. The scale, range of issues and the fact that the clients themselves are often under pressure, keeps one on

ones toes. However, I think my biggest challenge was as a trainee solicitor. Trying to learn sufficient basic skills, not just the technical law, but also the right way to construct a letter, address the court and communicate with clients, was an uphill task. Once I had found my "voice" and the confidence to communicate authentically, I was away.

Which person within the legal profession inspires you most?

Tom Huggon. He was a partner at the firm when I was a trainee. He took me under his wing and I learnt so much from him. The importance of working out what advice the client actually needed as well as what he had asked for, for one; and the importance of thinking big, for another.

If you weren't a lawyer, what would you choose as an alternate career?

In my fantasy world, opening the batting for Yorkshire and England (with the tenacity of Boycott and the timing of Gower!). In the real world a leadership role in nature conservation or the environment.

Who is your favourite fictional lawyer?

A toss up between (1) Sydney Carton from A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens (talk about taking one for the team!) (2) Ally McBeal – (I loved the dancing baby!)

What change would you make to the profession?

Reducing the number of places available at Law Schools around the country. There is a disconnect between the number of young lawyers looking for training contracts and pupillages, and the positions available for them. All that cost and thwarted ambition is not the right way to encourage and develop the next generation of lawyers.

How do you relax?

My family, watching sport and bird watching.

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