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Citation: Allbon, E. (2014). Book Review: The Path to Pupillage, 2013, Sweet & Maxwell, 3rd edn. The Law Teacher, 48(2), pp. 223-225. doi: 10.1080/03069400.2014.914743

This is the accepted version of the paper.

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Permanent repository link: <https://city-ref-test.eprints-hosting.org/id/eprint/18829/>

Link to published version: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069400.2014.914743>

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The Path to Pupillage – Georgina Wolfe and Alexander Robson (Sweet and Maxwell, 2013, 3rd Edition, 298 pages) paperback: £16.95

Wolfe and Robson's excellent book is now in its third edition and this should come as no surprise. Written as a guidebook for those with an eye firmly on the Bar, *The Path to Pupillage* offers a comprehensive, no-punches-pulled, no-stone-left-unturned compendium.

The book succeeds in balancing being inspirational, at the same time as offering sensible and pragmatic advice. What works is that it is a very personal tale, with the experiences of so many barristers woven into the factual chapter elements. The barrister voices range from pupils to Justices of the Supreme Court, and the full spectrum in between. You know from the off that this is a work admired by many, when the foreword is given by The Right Honorable The Lord Judge. The first edition included a foreword by The Right Honorable The Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers.

Four pages near the start of the book are entitled 'A dose of reality' and these present the pertinent statistics around numbers of BPTC graduates and pupillages available. This follows a compilation of musings on the Bar from many successful barristers whom you and your students would be familiar with. In less capable hands this could feel a little clumsy; good cop, bad cop-esque, however here it works very effectively.

Standout sections include The Future Barrister's Timetable and the chapter on the Inns of Court. The timetable details the important dates for LLB students: both during and for that important final year of the course. For GDL students it covers the pre-Law School era too. The BPTC year is also set out. There is an excellent checklist of activities that would-be barristers might be advised to pursue – with links to chapters where this might be covered within the book. The Inns chapter gathers together a brief history of each Inn, famous members and a notable features section detailing both any cultural connections, as well as moot/debating opportunities, entertainment and traditions. Most useful though is the information around scholarships: what is available – how much – how many likely applicants.

Those amongst you who act as personal tutors will find plenty here to recommend to your tutees aiming for the Bar. Each of the three law courses; the LLB, the GDL and the BPTC, are dissected, with information on the course components and advice on factors to consider when choosing a law school, and how to apply. There are practical tips and pointers on dealing with the challenges students will face on these very different routes into Law. The authors have passed on some real gems here, and not just stuck to the tired old observations we've heard many places before. Mini pupillages are covered in great detail; with answers to those tricky questions you may often be asked: How many should I do? How do I make a good impression? The section on what to do after a mini was excellent; ensuring students keep a record of what they did and what they learnt.

Mooting and debating are given good, if brief, coverage, with useful overviews, advice on technique and ideas on where to seek opportunities in these areas. The chapters on pro bono and other work experience options (both legal and non-legal) are very useful as they go far further than just offering up the Free Representation Unit and Citizens Advice Bureaux, as so many books limit themselves to doing.

For those of you with students who know they want to be a barrister but are stumped on which area to practice in, Wolfe and Robson offer an overview of these. Each practice area includes an indication of the types of issues that are likely to be crop up in cases and what the nature of the work will be. Also detailed is what you will be likely to be doing: standing up in court or committing to hours of research. They also offer pros and cons of each practice area and ideas for useful work experience. This section is invaluable.

The chapter on applications covers the types that might be encountered, and gives advice on what information each section is really trying to extract from applicants. The interviews chapter works well: listing seven interview questions and analysing what pupillage committees are looking for. This deconstruction should really get your students focusing their preparation. The book finishes up with a useful glossary and resources section.

It's a small thing but I'd like to see Sweet and Maxwell publishing this book in a slightly bigger size; the font feels a little crowded on some pages.

There are at least two other books covering similar ground: Adam Kramer's *Bewigged and Bewildered? A Guide to Becoming a Barrister in England and Wales* and *Pupillage Inside Out: How to succeed as a pupil barrister* by Daniel K Sokol and Isabel McArdle. Kramer's book has an excellent 'Week in the life of a junior barrister' chapter and the comparison between employment in a large law firm and the self-employed life as a barrister. However it's the tone of Wolfe and Robson's book, which makes it such a good companion for students serious about entering the Bar. Down-to-earth, wide-ranging and honest, this book, with its killer combination of practical guidance and anecdote, manages to give a reality check, motivate and reassure simultaneously. I'm a big fan.

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