

PASSING ON THE BATON TO THE NEXT GENERATION

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JOURNEY OF A FIRE STARTER

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After a number of years on the board of ThoughtLeaders4's signature next-generation FIRE event (the FIRE Starters Global Summit in Dublin), earlier this year Jon Felce was proud to pass on the TL4 torch to his CYK colleague, Senior Associate, Leonore Carron-Desrosiers. After Leonore's first summit on the board, and ahead of Jon joining the board for FIRE International in Vilamoura, Portugal, Jon and Leonore give their thoughts about their respective journeys to fire up the next generation of asset recovery practitioners.



Jon:

When TL4 launched, there appeared to be a real dearth of opportunities for up-and-coming practitioners to have their voice heard, and to get the opportunities to actively partake in industry events and build the kind of connections that senior figures within the industry had well established. The intention behind FIRE Starters was therefore to create a space

for rising stars of the industry to learn from each other, share their expertise and develop essential business skills to make their mark in the industry. FIRE Starters aimed to provide an informal space for young professionals from around the world to participate in panels and workshops, and to interact with each other in a welcoming and thought-provoking environment.

During the early days of TL4, COVID hit. Whilst that could have put a dampener on the fledgling next-gen movement, ironically the seeds of success were borne in those difficult first couple of years. Without the restraints of marketing budgets and overseas travel, far more opportunities to speak and develop contacts presented themselves online and at minimal to no cost. An overarching FIRE Starters committee was formed, together with various

regional committees, who between them started to get to know one another over Zoom, worked together to arrange a host of online webinars and even started to refer matters (my first of those being from Dominik Milani of NSF in Switzerland, a member of one of those committees and someone I had only met via Zoom at the time).

Fast forward to the end of COVID, and the first Dublin event took place in 2022. The agenda was drafted by the advisory board, who were also able to invite their peers to speak (and fancy dress), and was an overwhelming success, bringing over 220+ attendees from 21+ jurisdictions. Many of the people from those early days and since have become friends, as well as people who I look to catch-up with at industry events and, of course, refer a case to from time to time.



By the time the FIRE Starters Global Summit had occurred in 2025, it became apparent that it was time to hand over the reins to a talented colleague. Standing at the bar in House waiting to get a drink, it dawned on me that the room was full of more junior people I didn't recognise, the next up-and-coming generation of asset recovery practitioners. I was very pleased therefore to hand over the baton to Leonore this year, and by all accounts the FIRE Starters Global Summit was a resounding success. Whilst remaining young at heart, even if the hairline is challenging that assumption, I look forward to remaining engaged in the next generation community as part of the FIRE Starters Committee as the next wave of superstars grow the initiative yet further.

In the meantime, I am looking forward to joining the upcoming advisory board for FIRE International in Vilamoura with one of my former Dublin advisory board members Caroline Greenwell of Charles Russell Speechlys for company amongst others. Many speakers from the early days of FIRE Starters have similarly migrated to the speaking agenda, a reflection of the success of the initiative.

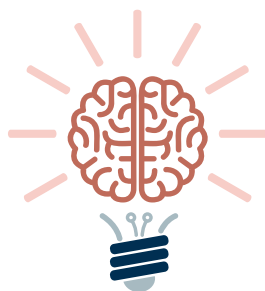
With FIRE Starters Summer Schools a regular feature of the calendar, next-gen pre-conferences added to established events, and most recently drinks and walks on the menu, these are exciting opportunities for FIRE Starters to develop their networks and get the experience and confidence that will stand them in good stead for the future.

Leonore:

A few months ago, Jon asked if I would be interested to join the advisory board for the FIRE Starters Global Summit in Dublin, which took place on 25-27 February 2026. He spoke very highly of the FIRE Starters initiative, its welcoming culture and thought-provoking community. I was excited to attend my first conference abroad and to speak on my first panel. I felt like it would be a unique opportunity to meet like-minded professionals who share my

interest in asset recovery and learn from their experiences.

The reality exceeded my (already very high) expectations. I first met other attendees and members of the advisory board when I joined a number of prep calls for a multi-jurisdictional panel titled 'A Transatlantic Conversation' with moderator Stéphane de Navacelle (from France), and co-panellists Andrea Hartley (from the U.S.), Joanna Didisheim (from Switzerland), and Kazimieras Karpickis (from Lithuania). It was clear from the start that this was a like-minded community of young and proactive professionals. We discussed our individual experiences seeking enforcement and using the different asset recovery measures available in our respective jurisdictions. I gained unique insight into different legal systems which I'm sure will prove useful for my practice as I mostly work on complex cross-border matters. It was also fascinating to realise how different the interaction between civil and criminal proceedings is between common law jurisdictions such as the U.K. and the U.S. versus civil law jurisdictions such as those of some of my co-panellists.

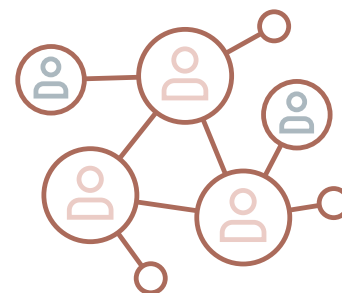


The outcome of these brainstorming sessions proved to be a very successful panel, which did not feel rehearsed or impersonal. I found that the relaxed and friendly atmosphere of the conference meant that my first panel was a dynamic session, where I felt comfortable speaking at length about topics I'm really interested in, such as contempt of court, and sharing my practical experience using specific remedies such as the oral examination procedure under Part 71 of our Civil Procedural Rules.

I also met many very inspiring lawyers, insolvency practitioners and other professionals in the asset recovery space from all around the world. In particular, I had the chance to meet Swiss lawyer Tobias Schaffner, who I know Jon invited to speak at last year's FIRE Starters Global Summit and to whom we have referred work and received work from since. I had

previously worked with Tobias on a cross-border matter last year. Although we'd spoken many times on calls, we'd never had the chance to meet in person. In Dublin, we finally met and discovered that we shared far-ranging interests from recent caselaw involving crypto assets to more mundane topics such as European travel.

Far from being limited to strictly legal discussions, the FIRE Starters Summit also features inspirational speakers from very different industries and fosters an interdisciplinary approach to our highly technical careers. As part of my role on the Advisory Board, I also co-chaired the conference and introduced keynote speaker, Professor Richard Wiseman who gave a talk on the psychology of lying. This year, rugby legend Former Captain of Ireland & The British & Irish Lion Brian O'Driscoll also shared his personal journey and it was fantastic to see how such a different experience resonated with the audience.



I found FIRE Starters Global Summit to strike a perfect balance between intellectually stimulating talks, energetic technical conversations and fun networking activities (such as visiting the Guinness Storehouse). I very much look forward to participating in next year's summit and to continue to take on more responsibility to help bring together the event and support the FIRE Starters initiative.

