

MiniTrials held at Edinburgh Sheriff Court

Around 200 schoolchildren and teachers appeared at Edinburgh Sheriff Court on Saturday to take part in the Edinburgh Schools MiniTrials.

The young people took part in reconstructions of criminal and civil trials, learning about the Scottish legal system as they did so.

Since the first MiniTrial was held in 2002 thousands of young people have taken part using real court rooms and real court staff.

The annual Edinburgh Schools MiniTrials returned this year after being put on hold due to the pandemic. Participating schools included Trinity Academy, Currie High School, James Gillespie's High School, Boroughmuir High School, Firrhill Academy, Tynecastle High School, Royal High School, Leith Academy, Craigmount High School and Balerno High School.

Faculty members have volunteered since the beginning of this initiative, originally by visiting schools and helping pupils to stage MiniTrials in class. This year, the five Faculty members that took on the role of judges during the trial reconstructions at Edinburgh Sheriff Court were Fergus Colquhoun, Andy Lamb KC, Elaine Smith, Shirley McKenna and Paul Harvey.

Other organisations that have lent their support over the

years include the Law Society of Scotland, the Procurator Fiscal Service, the WS Society, and city councils in the areas where the events have taken place.

Faculty's Joint MiniTrials Coordinator, Michael Upton, who again devoted considerable time to ensure the success of the Edinburgh event, said: "Members of Faculty have also helped to organise and run similar MiniTrial events in various Sheriff Courts across the country in previous years, such as Kilmarnock, Edinburgh Paisley, Ayr, Dundee and Glasgow.

"The legal system exists to serve the public – so we have a duty to explain how the courts work – and there's no better place to begin than with such interested and enthusiastic schoolchildren.

"This is Lord Kinclaven's inspiration and groundwork being put into practice," he added.

The event is sponsored by the Faculty of Advocates and organised by a steering group chaired by Lord Mulholland.



Local schoolchildren taking part in the Edinburgh Schools MiniTrials at Edinburgh Sheriff Court.