



CHAIR'S REPORT

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CHANCERY BAR ASSOCIATION

**MONDAY, 3 JULY 2023, 5PM
BY ZOOM**

INTRODUCTION

1. I am delighted that the Association has, over the last year, fully emerged from the pandemic, buzzing with energy and enthusiasm. This is obvious from the summaries of the work of each Sub-committee below. CLIPS provides a perfect illustration. There has been at least one CLIPS volunteer every single available day so far in 2023 and we were delighted in May to announce no less than 8 CLIPS Pro Bono Champions' Awards for those members who had volunteered for at least three days in the calendar year. The Association and the judiciary are hugely grateful for your commitment, so please keep volunteering.
2. In addition to our excellent on-line and hybrid seminars, I am pleased that we have been able to enjoy a wide range of in-person events and conferences this year. I would particularly like to thank Kavan Gunaratna for organising last year's excellent Summer Conference and David Holland KC for being the charismatic chair of a well-attended and memorable Winter Conference in January. We have also finally been able to travel abroad again to promote the talents of our members to clients further afield. In particular, the Association paid its first, highly enjoyable, visit to the British Virgin Islands at the end of April for a conference superbly chaired by Michael Gibbon KC, which was very well received by the local legal community.
3. The Association has continued its important work of improving diversity at the Chancery Bar and attracting individuals from currently under-represented backgrounds. We are extremely pleased to have been able to launch the Social Mobility Bursary scheme earlier this year, in partnership with the Inns of Court College of Advocacy. The scheme was funded by £100,000 from the Association's reserves. There were twenty applications in this first year of the scheme's operation and four bursaries were awarded. It was clear from the emails I received that these awards will make a real difference for students who are interested in Chancery work, but might




not otherwise have been able to afford the Bar Course.

4. The Association continues to liaise regularly with the Chancellor and to have an excellent relationship with all the judges of the Chancery Division. I was especially pleased recently to have revived the tradition of welcoming new Chancery judges, including the Association's former Chair, Mr Justice Rajah. We continue regularly to represent the Association at meetings of the Bar Council, including on the General Management Committee, and at meetings of the Chancery Court Users' Committee, the Chancery Liaison Committee and the Central London County Court Users Group.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic Liaison Sub-Committee (Chair – Lesley Anderson KC)

5. The two main activities of the Sub-committee this year have been the Academic Forum and Dinner and our representation and participation in pupillage fairs including the Bar Council's Pupillage Fair and the King's College Careers Fair.
6. The Academic Forum took place on 10 October 2022 at Gatehouse Chambers and was followed by a very convivial dinner at Gray's Inn. The forum was attended by our distinguished academic members: Professor Stephen Watterson; Professor Martin Dixon; Professor Graham Virgo; Professor Paul Dawson; Professor Dame Sarah Worthington KC and Professor Joshua Getzler and Professor Jamie Lee, the academic representative on the Sub-committee; along with other members of the Association.
7. Our lively discussion included: student liaison and how best to promote the work of the Bar (but especially the Chancery Bar and the Association) to students; academic liaison and how our academic members and the Association best work together to promote the work of the Chancery Bar and the Association; the challenges facing our academic institutions of which we should all be aware; sharing legal knowledge and how our academic members can best collaborate to share their legal knowledge with members of the Association and vice versa. Two key take-home points from the forum for our action list concerned how best to inform and educate the best students about the diverse work at the Chancery Bar and an insight into the difficult conditions facing



universities and academic institutions. We are especially grateful to Professor Lee for his assistance with the forum and thank all those who attended to share their wisdom and experience.

8. The Bar Council Pupillage Fair took place in two parts: a seminar on Life at the Chancery/Commercial Bar on 11 October 2022 (held remotely) and the Fair held in London on 14 October 2023. 235 attended the remote seminar and expressed interest in the Chancery Bar. Of a total 714 students who attended the Fair, 349 expressed being most interested in the Chancery/Commercial Bar. We were all encouraged that 61% of the attendees identified as women and 40% as being from an ethnic minority heritage. I am grateful to the many members of the Association who attended to assist at the Fair and to Celia Rooney, Justin Mort KC, Lucy Garrett KC, Carly Sandbach and James Macdonald who participated in the lively discussion at the seminar. Plans are in place for this year's Fair which is to take place in October 2023. We are liaising with the Bar Council to express our concern that holding the Fair on a Saturday and/or during half-terms may prevent some people from attending.
9. We are also very grateful to Lemuel Lucan-Wilson and Harriet Holmes for attending the King's College Careers Fair which took place on 28 October 2022 and for Professor Lee for making the opportunity available to us.
10. The Sub-committee comprises Lesley Anderson KC (Chair); Joseph Ollech; Harriet Holmes; Georgia Bedworth; Professor Jamie Lee; and Rosanna Foskett. Sincere thanks to them.

Consultation Responses (Chair – Alexander Learmonth KC)

11. The work of the Consultations Sub-committee may not always be the most glamorous or high-profile activity carried out by the Association, but it is important to ensure that the voice of the Chancery Bar continues to be heard on issues from judicial pensions to BSB disciplinary processes, and from mandatory mediation proposals to the substantive reform of the law of corpses.
12. The last year has been as busy and varied as ever, with at least 13 responses provided. I am hugely grateful to Alexander Learmonth KC for efficiently chairing the Sub-committee, to Sophia Hurst for her connections and wisdom and to all those many volunteers from across the Chancery Bar who willingly give their time and expertise to work on responses after only minimal persuasion (and coercion) from the Sub-committee.




Education and Training Sub-Committee (Chair – James Pickering KC)

13. It has been another busy year for the Education and Training Sub-committee, having put on a mix of in-person seminars and on-line webinars over a range of topics aimed at all different seniorities and experience.
14. In October 2022, the legal year got off with a bang with a Back-to-Basics in-person session on the practice and procedure for winding up petitions. It was a completely full house with the drinks afterwards proving to be just as popular and a great opportunity to introduce the junior bar to the work of the committee. That was followed by an equally well attended in-person event put on jointly with our friends from the LSLA on the new Chancery Guide – our speakers including Mr Justice Fancourt and Master Kaye who were two of the principal architects behind the Guide.
15. Other highlights included the Annual Lecture (this year delivered by Lady Justice Asplin), an online session on EBTs, a trust-based collaboration with PIBA and PNBA, and an Advocacy Masterclass from Lady Justice Andrews, Mr Justice Green, Master Clark and Judge Daniel Dovar, exploring various advocacy “do and don’ts” from the tribunals to the Court of Appeal.
16. Going forward more of the same is planned: in person and remote talks from the judiciary, practitioners and experts on a diverse range of useful and interesting topics.
17. The members of the Sub-committee are James Pickering KC (Chair), Iain Quirk KC, Kavan Gunaratna, Faith Julian, Laura Inglis, Charlotte John, Robyn Cunningham and I extend my thanks to them all.

Equality & Diversity Sub-Committee (Chair – Yasmin Yasseri)

18. The E&D Sub-committee has also had another busy year. In December 2022 the Black Inclusion Group’s (“BIG”) report, “*The Specialist Commercial Bar & Black Inclusion – First Steps*” was formally launched at a well-attended event at Gray’s Inn where the authors discussed their findings and recommendations, and attendees from a range of different backgrounds and organisations were able to contribute their thoughts.
19. In effecting the Association’s BIG action plan, specifically in relation to the recommendation to collaborate with at least one organisation whose aims include reaching Black students to advertise the Specialist Commercial Bar, the Sub-committee was proud to organise a bespoke event with




BME Legal, kindly hosted at Serle Court in December 2022, where a group of black students met with Chancery barristers and learned about their areas of work and received specific guidance on their CVs and application forms. Further collaboration with BME Legal is planned for the next pupillage cycle.

20. Again, in furtherance of the Association's BIG action plan, collaborative work with COMBAR and TecBar has continued with a joint session in February 2023 on demystifying the silk application process and encouraging barristers from a wider range of backgrounds to apply for silk; and another in June 2023 with the editors of The Legal 500 and Chambers and Partners to consider issues of representation and inclusion. A further webinar is due later this year at which guidance will be provided to assist Chambers in data gathering with a view to measuring improvement in relation to representation, retention and recruitment among black barristers and others with protected characteristics.
21. In December 2022, as part of an ongoing outreach programme, the Sub-committee organised a well-attended webinar for students on Women at the Chancery Bar, and in March 2023 on Race and Ethnicity at the Chancery Bar, to spread the word about the wide and interesting range of work done by Chancery practitioners. Videos of those sessions, as well as those from previous years, are available to view on the Association's website.
22. The Sub-committee continues to lead the way in menopause awareness at the Bar. Having attended the Bar Council's roundtable discussion on menopause and the Bar with the Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP, a menopause café, kindly hosted by Gatehouse Chambers, is planned for the Autumn. This will be an opportunity for those interested or impacted to get together in an informal and welcoming environment.
23. The members of the Sub-committee this year were Yasmin Yasseri (Chair), Ruth Hughes, Sam O'Leary, Rajinder Sahonte, Faith Julian, David Drake, Gary Pryce and Cameron Stocks. Many thanks to them all.


International Sub-Committee (Chair – Michael Gibbon KC)

24. I am pleased to report that, since summer 2019, the Sub-committee has had a full year of more or less normal (i.e. pre-pandemic) activity. During the course of the year the ISC dealt with a number of ongoing projects, and in particular liaised with the Bar Council in respect of various



initiatives arising out of the government's support for the marketing of UK legal services internationally. But in line with the historical pattern, the principal activity of the ISC was arranging and delivering two international conferences. We were warmly welcomed on a return visit to Guernsey in November 2022, and the conference programme was very well-received. We were particularly pleased to see amongst the attendees HH Hazel Marshall (Williamson) KC (former Chair of the Association), who now sits as a Lieutenant Bailiff in Guernsey.

25. Then in April 2023, after a number of years of Covid-related delays, the Association put on its first conference in the BVI. This was very well attended and enthusiastically received. The local Bar Association also invited the Association to deliver a separate session on advocacy topics, which also proved very successful. It is hoped to explore with the BVI Bar Association whether some sort of ongoing advocacy training for local practitioners can be delivered via the Association.
26. Looking forward into next year, the plan is that the Cayman Placement Scheme, which was suspended because of Covid, can be relaunched for 2024. No destinations for the 2023/24 short or long-haul conferences have yet been finalised, but there is a strong chance that the long-haul destination will once again be Cayman, which we last visited in 2016.
27. As in past years, the ISC is keen to encourage all members of the association, regardless of their level of seniority, to consider offering their names as speakers at international conferences. The ISC been delighted that the conference speakers this year have included many juniors from a wide range of chambers and would like to see that continue. The ISC particularly draws attention to the fact that the Bar Council's International Grants Scheme for junior members has been up and running again this year and is expected to continue. We would welcome an increase in the number of applications for support for attendance at future conferences.
28. During the course of the year, a number of long-standing members of the ISC stepped down: Rory Brown, Oliver Phillips and Grace Cheng. We are very grateful to them for their work over an extended period. We were pleased to welcome a number of new members to the ISC during the year: Iain Quirk KC, Nicole Langlois and Sparsh Garg.
29. Also, after 5 years as ISC Chair, Michael Gibbon KC is stepping down at the AGM in favour of Iain Quirk KC. Michael will continue as a member of the ISC.


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30. The Sub-committee members during 2022/23 were: Michael Gibbon KC (Chair), James Potts KC, Iain Quirk KC (appointed 2022), Matthew Morrison, Nicole Langlois (appointed 2022), Rory Brown (retired 2022), Oliver Phillips (retired 2022), Grace Cheng (retired 2022), Rose Fetherstonhaugh, and Sparsh Garg (appointed 2022).

Junior Chancery Bar (Chair –Albert Sampson)

31. The Junior Chancery Bar has had another good year. The highlight of our educational events over the last 12 months was a joint session with the Junior London Solicitors Litigation Association on the relationship between project management and litigation, which was well attended by members from both groups. Offering opportunities for professional development and networking continues to be at the forefront of our minds.
32. Equally importantly, a JCB drinks party in the MCR gave our members the chance to catch up with one another in a relaxed setting. We were particularly encouraged to see lots of pupils at the event and hope to see this trend continuing, as it provides a great introduction to incoming members of the profession.
33. As ever, we are very grateful to the speakers, who give up their time to share their expertise and experience for the benefit of JCB members. A vote of thanks is also due to the members of the Sub-committee: Albert Sampson (Chair), Tim Sherwin, Lara Kuehl, Jessica Lavelle, and Rumen Cholakov.

Mentoring Sub-committee (Chair – Janet Bignell KC)

34. The Mentoring Sub-committee has continued to match pairs and to re-match where an initial mentoring relationship has reached a natural end or where a new match may be useful. Throughout the year, the mentoring scheme has also provided mentors to give confidential tailored short-term support and advice. That support may just comprise one or two conversations focussed around a specific concern like making an application, a career break or moving chambers.
35. We sincerely thank all our mentors. We were delighted when a recent mentee wrote: “*a quick note to say how brilliant I think this scheme is*” and described just how valuable their mentor’s support and advice had been for them.


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36. Applications from would-be mentors and mentees are always welcome (email Francesca at admin@chba.org.uk to join). Please do remember that no one is too junior or senior to join the scheme as a mentor or mentee or both. Visit the website, or just get in touch with a member of the Sub-committee, if you would like to learn more.
 37. The mentoring Sub-committee comprises Janet Bignell KC (Chair), Justin Higgs KC, Carly Sandbach and Tim Sherwin.

Pro-Bono Sub-Committee (Chair – Andrew de Mestre KC)

38. CLIPS will be 10 years old in December 2023. In that decade more than 500 different volunteers have provided more than 2000 days of volunteering and invaluable support to hundreds of litigants in person in the High Court and County Court at Central London. In the words of one High Court Judge's clerk "*assistance on CLIPS is so vital, and I wanted you to know how appreciated it is.*" It is a scheme of which the Association can rightly be extremely proud.
39. The Pro bono Sub-committee has continued to work to ensure that the scheme provides help for decades to come. 2023 has seen particularly strong volunteering and we are delighted that every single day so far has had a volunteer with a number volunteering three times or more and being well-deserved recipients of the Pro Bono Champion Award for 2023. CLIPS schemes are also now being run in the regions with the assistance of Association members. I would encourage all of those who have not yet volunteered to give the scheme a go.
40. Beyond CLIPs, the Sub-committee has continued to oversee the pro bono mediation scheme which was launched several years ago. It offers up to 4 hours of free mediation for suitable cases. There is a ready pool of volunteer mediators from the Association. So, if members are involved in cases where there is a litigant in person, we would ask them to consider taking advantage of the offer of free mediation assistance.
41. The members of the Sub-committee are Andrew de Mestre KC, Joe Curl KC, Rahul Varma, Matthew Morison, Zach Bredemear, Carly Sandbach, Chris Buckingham, and Karl Anderson.

Publications & Website (Chair – Oliver Marre)

42. The publications Sub-committee has been involved in a major rebranding exercise in 2023. We have now taken delivery of our new association logo and colour branding, and we are in the




process of working on a connected redesign of the website, writing paper, and email banners. It is hoped that this will all be completed by the end of the year.

43. The annual review was published in hard copy in December 2022 for the first time since the pandemic, and we are excited to be updating its design for 2023 in line with the new branding. The Sub-committee's general work in ensuring the website contents and associated publications remain up to date also continues.
44. Sub-committee members were Oliver Marre (Chair), Marie-Claire Bleasdale, Harriet Holmes and Lara Kuehl.

Wellbeing and CSR (Chairman – Gary Blaker KC)

45. In September 2022 we put on a panel event with Inspiring Governance. The aim of this event was to encourage members to volunteer as school governors. Thank you to Suzy Broadhead and Dominic Judge from Inspiring Governance for putting on the event and explaining the benefits of becoming a school governor. We had two members, Amanda Hardy KC and Jonathan Allcock join the panel and tell us about their personal experiences as school governors.
46. We continue to work with the Bar Council's Sustainability Network and have promoted this and also the Greener Litigation pledge. We were represented at the Bar Council's first sustainability summit in June 2023.
47. We have worked with the IBC in revising the Best Practice Policy to reflect post lockdown working patterns. The new policy is going to be launched at a joint ChBA and IBC event in September 2023.
48. Gary Blaker KC attended the launch of the Mindful Business Charter in March 2023. This Charter aims to provide guidance as how best to conduct litigation in a more mindful way and with the consequence of reducing unnecessary stress in the dispute resolution process.
49. Gary Blaker KC and Laurie Scher worked with the Bar Council and Advocate to launch two CSR awards (one for sustainability projects and the other for community projects). They were awarded during Pro Bono week in November 2022.
50. We continue to sit on and work with the Bar Council's wellbeing at the bar committee.
51. The members of the Sub-committee during 2022/3 were Gary Blaker KC (Chair), Charlotte May



KC, Laurie Scher, Will East, Alison Meacher, Eliza Eagling, Timothy Sherwin, Elizabeth Dwomoh, Eleanor Temple and Timothy Cowen and I extend my sincere thanks to them all.

THANKS

52. The work of the Association would not be possible, of course, without the help and support of so many people. I am enormously grateful to my Vice Chair, Ian Clarke KC, the Officers of the Association, the members of our main committee and all the chairs and members of our Sub-committees. It is an honour and a privilege to Chair an organisation in which so many talented people are prepared to dedicate so much of their free time for the benefit of everyone who practises at the Chancery Bar.
53. I would particularly like to thank four members of the main committee who are standing down this year: Lesley Anderson KC, Joe Curl KC, Michael Gibbon KC and Anna Markham. Each of them has been on the main committee for many years and each has made an enormous contribution to the work of the Association. I have been very grateful indeed for their advice and support.
54. When preparing the summaries on which the above report is based, the chair of every Sub-committee particularly thanked our tireless administrator, Francesca Compton. Everything the Association does, from the organisation of conferences to the weekly newsletter, appears to happen effortlessly and without mishap. But I know that the work and care involved to achieve that result is immense, and I am extremely grateful for everything Francesca does and for the good humour with which she does it.

Andrew Twigger KC
Chair
3 July 2023