

COMBAR AGM 21 July 2022

Report from the Chair

Introduction

1. I am delighted to deliver this report at our AGM, which like last year is held in a hybrid format. Welcome everyone. Those Chambers' Representatives on the Committee who are unable to join us will though have to cope with the challenges of voting online and will not enjoy the wonderful hospitality of Brick Court, for which many thanks as ever and especially to Fionn Pilbrow QC for making the arrangements.

2. This last year has been an exceptionally busy year for COMBAR and I need to start my short remarks by thanking every single member of the Executive, each of the Officers, the sub-committee members and of course our administrators for the tireless work and helping us move forward with what I believe is not only the most varied, but also the most important programme of work undertaken at COMBAR. I would also like to add my thanks to Nick Feeny, COMBAR's accountant.

3. Before turning to some of the highlights of our work it is important to say both certain good-byes and a big welcome as well.

4. At the end of June this year after many years of service Veronica Kendall and Alison Tighe have left us. As each will know from messages I have sent them, we at COMBAR owe each of them a huge debt of gratitude. They have put their heart and soul into this work. Veronica has been the right arm of no less than nine Chairs of COMBAR including myself. As I said to Veronica, she practically invented the job of COMBAR Administrator and did it all with a smile and a gentle sense of humour. Alison has helped Veronica in her work and also helped set up the India Committee from a standing start. We wish both of them well in their next adventures and we will have a chance in October 2022 when they will be guests of honour of ours to express some of that gratitude in person.

5. At the same time, we welcome Nic Wood our new Administrator who joined us in March 2022. In the short time Nic has been with us I think we can all see we have a real gem. Hard

working, with an insatiable appetite for responsibility and a great sense of fun to go with it. Nic, you did such a brilliant job in Florence at our Conference, thank you.

6. I had also wanted to say that 2022 was the year we said goodbye to Covid 19 but that is alas not quite the position. We have all had to address the many challenges throughout the year of teams being depleted by continuous infections, endless testing, hybrid hearings, remote hearings and I am delighted to say the return of in person hearings. The challenges will no doubt continue for the foreseeable future, but our profession has never been better placed to face them and where possible to try to find more productive and suitable ways of doing our work, frequently across multiple jurisdictions and time zones.

7. 2021-22 has been another busy year for COMBAR and although you can follow each area of our work in the individual reports below, I wanted to mention certain highlights, which I believe represent initiatives that should be at the forefront of what COMBAR stands for and delivers for its Members and the profession as a whole.

8. Encouraging diversity at the Commercial Bar from under-represented groups remains a core challenge. This is perhaps most keenly seen amongst black barristers who do not enjoy the same level of representation at the Commercial Bar as seen in other areas of our profession. My predecessor, Sonia Tolaney QC had the foresight to commission a cross SBA Report into this issue. The work was undertaken by a committee formed by three SBAs- COMBAR; Chancery Bar; and TechBar. The committee is called the Black Inclusion Group. They issued their report this year which we are looking at closely, but we have not in the meantime simply stood by.

9. We have this year started what we believe is a best in class programme to fund two full scholarships at the BCL in Oxford, the funding being matched by the University of Oxford. The scholarships are open to black students from this jurisdiction who meet the entry requirements for the BCL, and who have declared an interest in a career at the Commercial Bar, with priority being given to those who would not otherwise be able to afford this prestigious post graduate degree. We believe that this programme is a crucial first step in encouraging a pipeline of the talent that clearly is out there to come to the Commercial Bar. We will also make available our ground-breaking mentoring programme to assist the scholars. I want to thank not just Sid Dhar for his tireless work on this but everyone at Oxford for their

generosity and forward thinking approach and in particular Professor Mindy Chen Wishart and Professor Dorota Leczykiewicz quite simply for making this happen.

10. This year also sees the launch of the Social Mobility Mentoring Scheme which had previously been undertaken by Brick Court Chambers together with a number of other commercial sets. This scheme is now to be run by COMBAR and to date about twenty sets have indicated their participation. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds can apply to this scheme for mentoring which is then provided by barristers at the participating sets. This is a critical pathway to allow wider application to the commercial bar, from across all the whole country irrespective of background. This work would never have got off the ground without the hard work of Alex Wright QC and everyone helping him. Once more this is a programme we can be justly proud of.

11. It is only right that I now mention our extremely successful North America conference held this year in June in Florence, held after a series of postponements. It was well worth the wait. This is our flagship event and it was brilliantly organised by Fionn Pilbrow QC and Emily Wood QC. Thank you once more. This year in a nod to the 125th Anniversary celebrations of the establishment of the Commercial Court we had three very special judicial guests; Lord Hamblen; The Chancellor of the High Court, Lord Justice Flaux, and the (then) Judge in Charge of the Commercial Court, Mrs Justice Cockerill. Each made a huge contribution to the success of the conference, and we are very grateful to them. A very high bar has been set but I am confident that next year which is to be held in Miami around the Easter Vacation (13 – 15 April 2023) will be another triumph and we hope that the new Judge in Charge Mr Justice Foxton will accept an invitation to come and join us.

12. We have also spent a good deal of time this year reviewing and expanding our wider international efforts. Many of you reading this will be familiar with the success of the India Committee holding annual Roundtable Conferences in India. This year on 17 September 2022 we will break with tradition and hold the India Roundtable in Edinburgh to coincide with ICCA. It is already nearly sold out with just a handful of the last places remaining. In 2023 we will return to Mumbai.

13. A new Gulf sub committee has been formed with George Spalton QC and Tom Montagu Smith QC as Co-Chairs. They are looking to hold a Roundtable Conference in the Gulf in

February 2023 and looking at the enthusiastic response we have had to date this too looks to be another success in the making.

14. We are in the process of reforming two existing international committees, the Africa Committee (under Andrew Onslow QC and Abdul Jinadu QC) and the Offshore Committee. We thank Glen Davis QC and Nikki Singla QC for their past work on the Africa and Offshore Committees respectively, but they have graciously passed the baton on after many years' service. We are in the process of appointing chairs for the Offshore Committee, but they will aim to hold an event at the time of the North America meeting in Miami in 2023.

15. Finally, with the encouragement of various members we are looking at forming another international committee; a European Committee. This is a work in progress, but it seems wrong in a post Brexit world with all its challenges that we do not have such a committee when so many of our practitioners have such long lasting friendships and work relationships with our European colleagues.

16. Returning to domestic matters; looking forward in this coming year there are two further areas that I anticipate will occupy some of our energies. The first relates to an initiative to explore further discussion on wellness at the Commercial Bar by reference to the very specific challenges we face in our area of the profession. We started a discussion on this at a lively session in Florence and hope to organise a stand-alone event in the late Autumn of 2022. The second relates to law reform consultations. The Law Commission is looking at both the Arbitration Act and Contempt in the Face of the Court. It is very likely that Combar will respond in each of these important areas. Throughout these last three years Andrew George QC has done a superb job in the field of Combar's consultation responses. This is his last year in this role and I wanted to thank him from the bottom of my heart.

17. I also wanted to thank Dame Elisabeth Gloster DBE for giving the Combar Annual Lecture in November 2021. In the long tradition of the annual lecture, it was a thought provoking address on what the commercial court can learn from intentional arbitration and vice versa. In many ways it was the perfect companion piece to Lord Hamblen's masterful survey of the 125 year history of the Commercial Court and where we go from here. We are very grateful to Dame Elisabeth for delivering this lecture and giving us a small window in the next years' developments whether in relation to witness testimony or disclosure.

18. Last but by no means least I am delighted to see that Junior Combar is also moving forward after the pandemic and has been able to start hosting events again and fostering ties amongst the Junior cadre. Indeed their Summer Party is being held not long after the AGM. This is the last year of Kira King's stewardship as Junior Combar Chair. She will hand over the reins in December 2022.

19. The work of Combar and its activities are further detailed in the individual reports set out below in this Report.

DAVID JOSEPH QC

CHAIR, COMBAR

21 July 2022

Education Programme

1. As ever, COMBAR's education programme has been busy. After two years organising the talks solo – a period well above and beyond the call of duty – James Leabeater QC handed over the CPD baton to Philippa Hopkins QC and Josephine Davies in January 2022.
2. Most of the talks have taken place in Lincoln's Inn at the Ashworth Centre lecture hall or in one of their smaller conference rooms, although the Annual Lecture continues to be held in Gray's Inn Hall.
3. From autumn 2021 onwards, COMBAR restarted in-person lectures and seminars. Those who have attended have welcomed the opportunity to meet, and most speakers have been glad to address a live audience rather than a camera. However, in recognition of the popularity of the online events which took place during lockdown, we have continued the option of online attendance. From a diversity perspective, we consider that there is much to be said for hybrid events; online access has proved to be particularly welcome to those for whom family and other commitments make evening events in London difficult.
4. There are two downsides to hybrid events: the first is that the numbers attending in person are, inevitably, smaller than if an event is in-person only. The second is cost: paying for both room hire and AV arrangements makes the lectures significantly more expensive to run than if they were wholly in person or wholly online. It may be that in the future we revert to having (say) one or two events as online-only events.
5. The Annual Lecture took place on 30 November 2021, and was delivered by Dame Elizabeth Gloster DBE. Her title was, "*What, if anything, can the Commercial Court today learn from commercial arbitration?*", and we are grateful to her for a thought-provoking, entertaining and not uncontroversial presentation. (Her conclusion was: quite a lot!)
6. The 2022 Annual Lecture will be held on 16 November 2022, in Gray's Inn Hall. The speaker will be the Chancellor, Sir Julian Flaux (lecture title to be announced).
7. Other COMBAR educational events in the 2021-2022 year were as follows:
 - 7.1 On 7 September 2021, Nigel Jones QC and Professor Paul Davies discussed the recent decision of the Supreme Court in *Pakistan International Airline Corporation v. Times Travel (UK) Ltd* [2021] UKSC 40 on economic duress.

7.2 On 5 October 2021, Mr Justice Foxton spoke on suggested reforms to the jurisdictional gateways in CPR PD 6B.

7.3 On 19 January 2022, Mrs Justice Cockerill and Mr Justice Andrew Baker gave a presentation on the new Commercial Court Guide (this event was particularly well attended, both in person and online).

7.4 COMBAR were the joint hosts, together with the United Kingdom Association of Jewish Lawyers & Jurists, TECBAR and the Chancery Bar Association on 8 February 2022, at which Sir Geoffrey Vos MR spoke on, *“Diversity in the law: reaching tipping point?”*

7.5 Mr Justice Foxton delivered a lecture in memory of the late Edmund King QC on 8 March 2022, entitled *“What did the French ever do for us? Historic and prospective French influences on English law”* on 8 March 2022; this event was followed by drinks.

7.6 On 3 May 2022, COMBAR, TECBAR and the Chancery Bar Association co-hosted an online seminar on maternity, paternity and adoption leave, chaired by Rachel Ansell QC.

7.7 On 9 May 2022 (moved from a date in April 2022), Professor Adrian Briggs QC spoke on issues of proving foreign law in the English courts following the Supreme Court decision in *FS Cairo (Nile Plaza) LLC v. Brownlie* [2021] UKSC 45, under the heading, *“Proof of foreign law and Egyptian mythology”*.

7.8 On 8 June 2022, Professor Philippa Webb and Alex Thompson spoke on, *“Injunctions and Enforcement Measures against States: section 13 of the State Immunity Act 1978”*.

7.9 The Law Commission’s proposals in relation to the reform of the Arbitration Act 1996 were the subject of a seminar on 27 June 2022, presented by Professor Sarah Green and Nathan Tamblyn of the Commission.

7.10 On 27 July 2022, Maya Lester QC and Stephen Horan will speak on, *“Sanctions: issues for commercial lawyers”*.

8. Videos and/or written materials from the education programme can be viewed in the members’ area of the COMBAR website.

9. We are grateful to all those who have offered their time and expertise to speak to COMBAR. The professional education programme is at the heart of what we do.

10. Suggestions for speakers and topics are always welcome and should be made to Philippa Hopkins QC.

Consultations

11. During 2021/22, the COMBAR Consultations Team responded to a wide variety of procedural, substantive and strategic consultations issued by government, regulators and other legal profession stakeholders, utilising the wide variety of specialist expertise within the COMBAR membership to contribute as fully as possible to the important issues under debate.

12. In relation to substantive legal issues, COMBAR has conducted detailed research in order to respond to Government initiatives (1) to reform the rules governing the right to provide legal (and especially advocacy) services both for UK lawyers working abroad and foreign lawyers seeking to work on a short-term basis in the UK; and (2) for the UK's accession to the Singapore Convention on Mediation. COMBAR also continues to work closely with the Law Commission, both in the selection of subjects for its consideration, and in the initial stages of what will be a substantial and significant project, with a high impact on COMBAR members – the potential reform of the Arbitration Act 1996.

13. On procedural issues, COMBAR continues pro-actively to monitor the operation of the disclosure pilot and new witness statement rules as well as participating in the Civil Justice Council's Working Group considering the wholesale reform of Pre-Action Protocol rules.

14. There were also, again, a very large number of regulatory consultations with implications for the Commercial Bar (whose highly specialist and distinct nature can often be overlooked in consultations relating to the entire legal profession) to which COMBAR responded including the Legal Services Board's proposed Statement of Policy for Empowering Consumers and modifications of its rules relating to ongoing competence, and the Bar Tribunal and Adjudication Service's latest reforms to the professional sanctions rules.

15. In all three areas – substantive, procedural and regulatory – there is a packed agenda of continuing projects and new proposed consultations to look forward to in 2022/23.

Pro Bono

16. COMBAR has continued to run a pro bono scheme for representation of litigants in person appearing in hearings of a day or less in the Commercial Court and the London Circuit Commercial Court. The trial period of the scheme has come to an end and it is now subject to a review by David Mumford QC and Adam Kramer QC. Whilst there are a large number of COMBAR members who have kindly offered to act as volunteers, to date take-up of their support by litigants in person has been limited, and options for the alteration and expansion of the scheme to improve this are under consideration. COMBAR is grateful to HHJ Pelling QC and Mr Justice Foxton for their invaluable contributions to this process.

Equality and Diversity

Projects

17. We thank the outgoing Chair of the E&D Committee, Ruth Hosking, for all of her hard work.

18. Below we set out the work that COMBAR's E&D Committee has been undertaking over the past year. Broadly, these projects have been aimed at (1) improving access to the profession; and (2) improving progression and retention of members once in the profession.

Projects aimed at access

19. Oxford BCL scholarship. In April this year, COMBAR agreed with the University of Oxford to offer two scholarships for study on the BCL for a 3-year period. The Scholarships are available to graduate students ordinarily resident in the UK and declaring Black/Mixed Black ethnicity, who indicate a serious interest in commencing a career at the commercial bar. We are excited about this new venture which we hope will encourage talented applicants to apply for pupillage at COMBAR member sets.

20. Inner Temple and Middle Temple COMBAR scholarship schemes. These are existing schemes which we support. They are administered by the Inns and look at under-represented groups, providing a week's mini-pupillage at a commercial set and ongoing mentoring. The Inns have recently confirmed they intend to have a pause on recruitment for this year, as they wish to work through a backlog of applications that has arisen as a result of placements not taking place during the pandemic. Despite this, the Inns are keen to stress that the schemes will continue into the future and have requested our continued support.

Law Fairs.

21. As mentioned in previous reports, the Law Fairs Programme is now administered by the Bar Council. The Bar Council have confirmed that it will be running a hybrid programme this year with an online Pupillage Fair throughout the week commencing 10 October, and an in-person fair on Saturday 15 October 2022.

Cake and Counsel.

22. This is an organisation set up by a criminal practitioner (Ruth Reid at 3 Temple Gardens), which provides informal and formal networking and learning opportunities for aspiring lawyers and law students from all backgrounds. It has previously held highly successful events targeting aspirant barristers from underrepresented groups. We have reached out to Ruth to offer support for any events that she may be running this year but have not yet had a response.

Gray's Inn Griffin LAW Programme.

23. Gray's Inn have a programme called GRIFFIN LAW (Law and Advocacy Workshops) which is their vehicle for promoting social mobility and access to the Bar. The Griffin Access Programme ("GAP") forms part of the outreach programme and is an 18-month programme working with students in Years 12 & 13. This year the E&D Committee ran a session on the commercial bar. It was split into a panel discussion of commercial practitioners, a Q&A session and then break out to do a mock advocacy exercise. Our thanks to Ruth Hosking who ran the session this year.

Funding for FreeBar.

24. COMBAR has good links with FreeBar, a network aiming to foster inclusion and support for LGBT+ people working as and with barristers. This year COMBAR has helped to fund the FreeBar Visibility project, which is aimed at increasing visible inclusivity at the Bar and which records the experience of those identifying as LGBT+ in a publication which will be provided to law libraries and offered online.

Projects aimed at improving progression and retention of members

Black Inclusion Group ("BIG").

25. The BIG is a cross-SBA working group, jointly commissioned by the ChBA, COMBAR and TECBAR in June 2020 to report on Black inclusion at the specialist areas

covered by the three SBAs. The BIG published its report in April 2022, setting out recommendations which are currently the subject of active consideration within the E&D Committee, COMBAR executive, and between the SBAs. We are very grateful to the members of the BIG for their time and efforts in carrying out this work, as well as to those who have shared their experiences with the BIG. The E&D Committee proposes to appoint a dedicated committee member to lead on Black inclusion for the upcoming year.

Income Disparity Working Group.

26. The Income Disparity Working Group was established earlier this year, to support the work that COMBAR sets are doing to implement the Bar Council's proposals and to facilitate interaction between chambers who are undertaking work in this area. It will focus first on gender pay gap issues, with a view to extending the review to underrepresented groups in due course. The intention is to hold an open roundtable in November 2022 for sets to share their experiences in undertaking analysis into income disparity. Georgina Peters (Chair of the Working Group) is currently considering a draft agenda for the roundtable. The longer-term intention is that the roundtable might lead to some form of charter for best practice being sent to all member sets, but the precise form and extent of this remains under discussion.

Disability.

27. The lack of a member with responsibility for a disability portfolio was identified in the previous E&D report and we are pleased to say that James McWilliams has joined the E&D Committee. The Committee is keen to pursue projects relating to those with disabilities, both in terms of assisting those already at the Commercial Bar and encouraging those with disabilities to consider a career at the Commercial Bar. To that end, rather than reinvent the wheel, it is seeking to explore with other organisations already working in this space, of which there are now several, whether they have existing initiatives to which COMBAR can and should lend its support, whether financial or otherwise.

Joint event COMBAR/ChBA/TECBAR/Gray's Inn and UK Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists (UKAJLI). This is now an annual event. The chair of the UKAJLI is Mr. Justice Waksman. An in person event was held on 8 February 2022 with Sir Geoffrey Vos speaking on "Diversity in the Law: reaching tipping point?"

Under-represented groups.

28. It had previously been proposed that the E&D Committee would consider how to run a programme similar to the ChBA's Voices of Women Report but looking at underrepresented groups more generally. The view of the E&D Committee was that the project was likely to be overly broad, given the very different challenges that face the different underrepresented groups at the Bar. There was also a risk that such a project would be duplicative of the extensive work done by the ChBA (in relation to gender) and also by the BIG (on the experiences of Black practitioners). The E&D Committee has therefore decided not to proceed with this initiative but rather, to continue to pursue a programme of more targeted initiatives to address the issues facing various underrepresented groups.

29. New members: As a number of long-serving members of the E&D Committee have stepped down this year, the E&D Committee ran a recruitment drive to appoint new members. We would like to thank Josephine Davies, Conall Patton QC, Charlotte Pope-Williams, and Victoria Windle QC for all of their work on the committee over the years. We also welcome Celia Rooney, Rebecca Page, Harini Iyengar, Sara George, Marlena Valles, and Zulfikar Khayum, who will be joining the committee for the forthcoming year.

Mentoring scheme (Members)

30. The mentoring scheme for COMBAR members is now fully up and running. This offers an opportunity for members to discuss issues with and gain insights and support from other members of the Bar who have had relevant experiences, outside the confines of established relationships in chambers. The scheme has had a very good take-up, with over 30 pairs of mentors and mentees now actively participating. Further applications are welcome. [COMBAR is grateful to Sa'ad Hossain QC, Charlotte Tan, Hannah Glover, Ruth Hosking and James MacDonald QC, who have served on the matching committee, chaired by David Mumford QC.]

Mentoring Scheme - Social Mobility Mentoring Scheme (Students)

31. This year marked the launch of COMBAR's inaugural mentoring scheme for applicants from groups who are under-represented at the Bar, and the Commercial Bar in particular. It

follows two years of a similar scheme being administered and undertaken by a number of individual commercial sets, to whom COMBAR is indebted for pioneering this important project.

32. The objective of the scheme is to provide one-to-one mentoring support for applicants with the potential to pursue a career at the Bar who are in need of mentoring, particularly those from the most under-represented communities. A pupillage interview and application workshop, and social event, are also planned to take place in early 2023.

33. COMBAR is delighted at the excellent uptake of the scheme by member sets. As at the date of this report, 21 sets have agreed to provide mentors and cover reasonable travel expenses for their mentees. The participating sets are, in alphabetical order: Blackstone Chambers, Brick Court Chambers, Devereux Chambers, Essex Court Chambers, Fountain Court Chambers, Gatehouse Chambers, Henderson Chambers, Keating Chambers, One Essex Court Chambers, 7 King's Bench Walk, 11 King's Bench Walk, Monckton Chambers, 4 New Square, Quadrant Chambers, 4 Pump Court, Serle Court, South Square, 2 Temple Gardens, Twenty Essex, 3 Verulam Buildings and XXIV Old Buildings. Between those sets we expect there to be places for at least 250 mentees.

34. COMBAR has advertised the scheme widely through universities careers departments, and third sector organisations such as the Social Mobility Foundation and Sutton Trust. COMBAR is also grateful to its media partner, Legal Cheek, for promoting this important project and allowing it to be promoted at their recent Virtual Vacation Scheme Fair.

35. Applications are currently open until 16 September 2022 with successful applicants notified in October 2022 and the mentoring cycle then running to May / June 2023.

Niamh Cleary and Siddharth Dhar
Co-Chairs of the E&D Committee

Junior COMBAR

36. Junior COMBAR has further built on and strengthened its relationship with the Junior London Solicitor's Litigation Association ("JLSLA"). The JLSLA is currently chaired by Ra'eesa Mehta (Herbert Smith Freehills LLP) and I hope to organize a further joint event with the JLSLA during my tenure as Chair of Junior COMBAR.

37. Our first event was a Joint seminar with the JLSLA – "The new Witness Statement rules – The highs and lows, one year on" held on Wednesday, 29 June 2022 at Hogan Lovells LLP. The panelists included myself, Mrs Justice Cockerill, Maura McIntosh (Herbert Smith Freehills LLP) and Paul Johnson (Peters & Peters Solicitors LLP). The event was really well attended, extremely interesting and feedback on the event was uniformly positive.

38. Our second event will be our inaugural Junior COMBAR summer party to be held on Thursday 28 July 2022 at the Refinery, New Street Square. We are really grateful for the support we have received from the COMBAR and specifically David in order to host this event and are excited to finally have the opportunity to meet and share experiences with our peers, which is something that we have been unable to do for over two years now!

39. We, (the Junior COMBAR committee) have already started planning our events for Michaelmas term and are looking to hosting a joint event with the Black Solicitors Network (amongst other events) which has had to be postponed many times now because of the pandemic as part of Junior COMBAR's commitment to diversity.

Kira King

Chair Junior Combar

International

Africa Committee

40. Since the last AGM the Africa Committee has been reconstituted. Andrew Onslow QC (AO, 3VB) and Abdul Jinadu (AJ, Keating Chambers) are now co-Chairs. The membership of the Committee itself will be settled within the coming week. There was a good response to the invitation to apply, well sufficient to result in a strong and diverse Committee. It is intended to have a first meeting of the new committee in early September, and quarterly thereafter.

41. The Committee held its first event under "new management" on 14th June 2022. This was a reception/seminar for a high level Ghanaian delegation, led by the President of the

Ghanaian Bar Association (Mr Yaw Boafo), and with a welcome by Sara Cockerill. The speakers were AJ, Jane Davies-Evans (of 3VB, vice-Chair of 3VB's IADRU unit) and Nania Owusu-Ankomah (a leading Ghanaian arbitration practitioner). The event was held jointly with the Bar Council, with whom productive discussions in other Africa-related areas are underway. AO also attended the reception for the 7th UK-Nigeria Economic Development Forum at Lancaster House. Both AO and AJ have links with a number of other groups and organisations concerned with Africa-related work and initiatives, and expect to be able to take advantage of those, including to promote the work of Combar and the Africa Committee.

42. The Committee's primary task for the autumn term will be to identify a venue for the first annual "African" meeting, probably in late 2023, and begin to make the necessary arrangements. It will be modelled on the annual North American meeting.

Andrew Onslow QC

Chair, Africa Committee

Gulf Committee

43. The Gulf Sub-Committee was set up in 2022. The Co-Chairs are Tom Montagu-Smith QC (3VB) and George Spalton QC (4NS).

44. The sub-committee is made up of individuals from a range of chambers and different levels of seniority, all with extensive experience of work in the Gulf (whether DIFC, Dubai, Abu Dhabi or elsewhere).

45. The committee is currently planning an inaugural event which is due to take place in February 2023 in Dubai. It will involve a roundtable discussion followed by drinks and dinner. Further details will be circulated in the early part of the autumn.

George Spalton QC

Joint Chair, Gulf Committee

India Committee

46. The India Committee was formed in late 2016 and held three successful "Roundtable" events in Delhi and Mumbai over the succeeding years. Any activity in 2020 and 2021 proved impossible due to the severity of the pandemic's effects on the sub-continent and the

unavoidable uncertainty over making any future plans. We therefore approached 2022 with some trepidation. But this failed to account for what have proved to be three great strengths.

47. The first is the continuing bonds with our Indian colleagues which, to our great satisfaction, have survived a two-year hiatus. The second is the ability of Combar's events, if handled in the right way, to attract judicial interest and support at the highest levels. The third is the quality of the India Committee itself whose members have all contributed to our work.

48. With support from all these factors, we have taken the important step of holding our first event outside India, a one-day conference and dinner in Edinburgh on 17 September 2022, timed to fit around the ICCA and LCIA gatherings which are taking place on either side of our event. We are happy to report that we already have 20+ attendees from each jurisdiction which is very encouraging and nearly takes us to capacity. Much of this must be due to our having been able to attract as our guests the Hon'ble Justice Rohinton Nariman (one of the Indian Supreme Court's foremost judges of any decade) and Lord Justice Rabinder Singh, who needs no introduction. We are very fortunate to have them present and anticipate a stimulating meeting.

49. Finally, in order to show our continued commitment to India, we have also announced our 2023 Roundtable in Mumbai. The task of the incoming chair(s) will be to steer that event to another successful conclusion.

50. Last but not least we acknowledge the invaluable help over the years of, in particular, Alison Tighe and now Nic Wood.

Charles Béar QC

(Joint chair with David Joseph QC)

Chair, India Committee

North American Committee

51. I am happy to say that this year's report is not a report about the postponement of the North American Meeting; the meeting went ahead, at the third time of asking, in Florence from 1 – 3 June 2022. The meeting, I am pleased to report, was a success – well worth waiting for.

In summary, the meeting took place in Florence on 1 – 3 June 2021, at the Hotel Westin Excelsior (for accommodation) and Hotel St Regis (for meetings) either side of the Piazza Ognissanti.

52. So far as the conference itself was concerned:

We were treated to 8 excellent and varied short talks on the Thursday morning.¹ Thursday afternoon started with special session on “Advocacy in Commercial Proceedings”, featuring Lord Hamblen, Sir Julian Flaux and Cockerill J (on the English side) and Roberta Kaplan (Kaplan Hecker & Fink LLP) and Geoff Hall (McCarthy Tétrault LLP) (on the North American side). It was an excellent session, greatly appreciated by the audience, and we are particularly grateful to the three judges for their participation.

53. That was followed by a first for the NAM – a “wellbeing” session. A session entitled “Wellbeing and mental health in commercial practice, and the definition of ‘success’” was chaired by Oliver Caplin (Twenty Essex), and involved David Joseph QC (Essex Court), Emily Wood QC (Essex Court) and Peter Chaffetz (Chaffetz Lindsey LLP). It provoked a healthy debate, and was a session which all those present found valuable. Hopefully it will be the first of many more in years to come.

54. The Friday morning had as its theme “Judgment”. We were very fortunate to have, as our main speaker, Professor Sir Andrew Likierman, who provided a perspective from outside the law, and was one of the highlights of the conference. He was joined by Sir Julian Flaux in an event chaired by Cockerill J, which was followed by a highly entertaining debate.²

55. On the extra-curricular side:

The welcome drinks took place in the Hotel Westin. The Thursday night drinks event took place at the spectacular Palazzo Gondi, with the attendees treated to the stunning views of Florence’s famous sites from its roof terraces. The Friday evening gala dinner took place in the fabulous surroundings of the Villa Il Garofalo. The partners’ programme on the Thursday morning involved a walking tour of Florence followed by a roof-top lunch. Those that could

¹ With thanks to the speakers – Paul Morrison (Miller Thomson LLP), Mark Gelowitz (Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP), Charlotte Thomas (Brick Court Chambers), Tom Raphael QC (Twenty Essex), Roderick Cordara QC (Essex Court Chambers), Michael Briggs (McCarthy Tétrault LLP), Nik Yeo (Fountain Court Chambers), Nicholas Vineall QC (4 Pump Court) – and the session chairs – Ali Malek (3VB) and Barbara Dohmann QC (Blackstone Chambers).

² With thanks to the debaters – Roderick Cordara (Essex Court Chambers), Anneliese Day QC (Fountain Court Chambers); Christopher Boehning (Paul Weiss) and Timothy Ellam QC (McCarthy Tétrault LLP).

stay to the Saturday afternoon very able to enjoy a very special treat – a tasting and tour of his vineyard, Montecalvi, generously organised and hosted by James Drake QC (7KBW).

56. Beyond the North American Meeting itself:

The Temple Bar Scholars were hosted by COMBAR sets in October. Many thanks to all the sets who participated (and allowed us to accommodate two years' worth of scholars in one go, the 2020 contingent having had to postpone because of COVID).³

56.1 We assisted the American Inns of Court in finding speakers for various (virtual) events they organised.

56.2 We assisted the Bar Council with various North American-related (formal and informal) government consultations and initiatives.

57. As ever, a huge amount of thanks is due to all those who have assisted. Particular thanks are due to Emily Wood QC for the enormous amount of work with and on the venues / drinks events / dinner / caterers for the NAM. And nothing at all would happen without the work of our administrators, Veronica Kendall, Alison Tighe and Nic Wood. I am grateful to them all for the time and effort they have put in, and their consistent good humour throughout it all.

Fionn Pilbrow QC

Chair, North American Committee

Off-Shore Committee

58. As part of the Off-Shore committee's work plans are being considered to hold the second offshore conference in 2023, with the potential to combine it with the North America Meeting, This will be dependent on which venue is selected for NAM. However, it offers the potential to be an excellent event if it goes ahead in this format.

Nikki Singla QC

Chair, Off-Shore Committee

³ 3VB, 4 Pump Court, 4 New Square, 4 Stone Buildings, 7KBW, Blackstone Chambers, Brick Court Chambers, Devereux Chambers, Essex Court Chambers, Fountain Court Chambers, One Essex Court, Outer Temple Chambers, Quadrant Chambers, Serle Court Chambers, Twenty Essex, XXIV Old Buildings

Annex: COMBAR's Officers, Executive Committee Members and Sub-Committee

Chairs and Members

Officers

Chair: David Joseph QC (Essex Court Chambers)
Vice-Chair/Treasurer: Alex Gunning QC (One Essex Court)
Secretary: Henry King QC (Fountain Court Chambers)
Chair, International Committee: Fionn Pilbrow QC (Brick Court Chambers)
Consultation Chair: Andrew George QC (Blackstone Chambers)

Executive Committee members

Chloë Bell (Outer Temple Chambers)
Chris Bond (3VB)
Niamh Cleary (Fountain Court Chambers)
Josephine Davies (Twenty Essex)
Philippa Hopkins QC (Essex Court Chambers)
James Leabeater QC (4 Pump Court)
James MacDonald QC (One Essex Court)
David Mumford QC (Maitland Chambers)
Penelope Nevill (Twenty Essex)
Jeremy Richmond QC (Quadrant Chambers)
George Spalton QC (4 New Square)
Alex Wright QC (4 Pump Court)

Sub-committees

Inclusivity, Equality and Diversity:

Siddharth Dhar (Essex Court Chambers) and
Niamh Cleary (Fountain Court Chambers)–Joint Chairs
Josephine Davies (Twenty Essex) – Analysis of E&D statistics and retention of Women
Lucy Colter (4-New Square) – Liaison with the Social Mobility Mentoring Committee
Kira King (XXIV Old Buildings) – Liaison with Junior Combar
Conall Patton QC (One Essex Court) – Liaison with FreeBar
Georgina Peters (South Square) – Income Disparity Working Group
Richard Fisher QC (South Square) – 25th Anniversary Scholarship Scheme
James MacDonald (One Essex Court) – Liaison with Combar Executive Committee
Celia Rooney (Blackstone Chambers) – Law fairs
James McWilliams (3 Verulam Buildings) – Disability

Junior Combar:

Kira King (XXIV Old Buildings) – Chair
Owen Lloyd (Essex Court Chambers) – Vice Chair
Alexander Kingston-Splatt (Five Paper);
Alyssa Stansbury (One Essex Court)
Andrew Mcleod (One Essex Court)

Bibek Mukherjee (Essex Court Chambers)
Emma Hynes (Hardwicke Chambers)
Hannah Glover (3 VB)
Harry Adamson (Blackstone Chambers)
Jessica Powers (New Square Chambers)
Patricia Burns (One Essex Court)
Philip Ahlquist (Fountain Court Chambers)
Samuel Rabinowitz (Fountain Court Chambers)
Sophia Dzwig (3 VB)
Zahler Bryan (Serle Court Chambers)

International Sub-Committees

North America Committee:

Chair: Fionn Pilbrow QC, Brick Court Chambers
assisted by Emily Wood (Essex Court Chambers)

Africa Committee:

Chair: Andrew Onslow QC
Abdul Jinadu QC
Membership for 2022/23 to be confirmed.

Gulf Committee Co-Chairs: Tom Montagu-Smith QC and George Spalton QC

India and Asia Committee:

Charles Béar QC, Fountain Court Chambers and David Joseph QC, Essex Court Chambers
(Joint Chairs)
Andrew Pullen, Fountain Court Chambers
James Howells, Atkin Chambers
Josh Folkard, 4 New Square
Karishma Vora, 4-5 Grey's Inn Square
Niranjan Venkatesan, One Essex Court
Ravi Aswani, 36 Group
Sanjay Patel, 4 Pump Court
Sudhanshu Swaroop QC, Twenty Essex
Vasanti Selvaratnam QC, 36 Group

Offshore Committee:

Chair: Nikki Singla QC, Wilberforce Chambers

Consultation, Policy and Reform Committee

Co Chairs: Andy George QC, George Spalton QC
Penelope Nevill
Chris Bond

Continuing Education Programme ;

Co Chairs: Philippa Hopkins QC and Josephine Davies

Pro Bono Initiatives Chair: David Mumford QC

Student Mentoring Committee:

Chair: Alexander Wright QC

Sarah Abram QC

Adam Baradon (Blackstone)

Emily Betts (Gatehouse)

Lucy Colter (Four New Square)

Stephen Du (7KBW)

Philippa Hopkins QC

Adam Kramer QC

Ben Lask (Monckton)

Angharad Parry (Twenty Essex)

Leonora Sagan (Fountain Court)

Nick Sloboda (One Essex Court)

James Thompson (Keating)

Ben Woolgar (Brick Court)

Combar Chambers' Committee Representatives

Matthew Abraham (South Square)

Thomas Bell (Gatehouse Chambers)

Clive Blackwood (Lamb Chambers)

Veronique Buehrlen QC (Keating Chambers)

Richard Harrison (Devereux Chambers)

Edward Cumming QC (XXIV Old Buildings)

Peter Dodge (Radcliffe Chambers)

Anton Dudnikov (Essex Court Chambers)

Andrew Feld (Twenty Essex)

Orlando Gledhill QC (One Essex Court)

Hannah Glover (3 VB)

Simon Hattan (Serle Court)

Richard Hill QC (4 Stone Buildings)

Michael Holmes (7 KBW)

William Hooper (Monckton Chambers)

Ben John (Maitland Chambers)

Jennifer Jones (Atkin Chambers)

Chirag Karia QC (Quadrant Chambers)

Timothy Killen (2 Temple Gardens)

Luka Krsljanin (Blackstone Chambers)

David Lascelles (Littleton Chambers)

Kate Livesey (4 Pump Court)

David Lord QC (Three Stone)

Simon Mills (Five Paper)

Laura Newton (Brick Court Chambers)

Shail Patel (4 New Square)

Rosalind Phelps QC (Fountain Court Chambers)
James Potts QC (Erskine Chambers)
Richard Samuel (3 Hare Court)
Daniel Shapiro QC (Crown Office Chambers)
Justina Stewart (Outer Temple Chambers)
Daniel Stilitz QC (11 KBW)
Ben Symons (The 36 Group)
Karishma Vora (39 Essex Chambers)
Sarah Walker (Selborne Chambers)
John Wardell QC (Wilberforce Chambers)
Henry Warwick QC (Henderson Chambers)
Hermione Williams (New Square Chambers)
Individual Members' Representatives
Jalil Asif QC (Kobre & Kim)
Jennifer Meech (Enterprise Chambers)
Dr Anthony Richardson (9 Bedford Row)