

RCJ Advice Bureau

ANNUAL REPORT
2002 - 2003

RCJ Advice Bureau - Annual Report 2002-2003

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RCJ Advice Bureau - *Mission Statement*

To provide access to justice to unrepresented litigants and potential litigants in the Royal Courts of Justice and the Principle Registry of the Family Division, through the provision of legal and other advice services.

Strategic Aims

To ensure that individuals do not suffer through lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, or of the services available to them through their inability to express their needs effectively;

To develop an effective and efficient service through partnership working with the voluntary sector, pro bono providers, court services, government bodies and funders;

To exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, both locally and nationally.

The CAB service is independent and provides free, confidential and impartial advice to everyone regardless of race, gender, sexuality or disability.

Foreword by the Attorney General

"I am delighted to introduce this year's Annual Report. The Bureau is a unique and highly successful institution which combines a rare blend of resources and talent. Expert permanent staff work with honorary legal advisers from more than fifty law firms, with the barristers who assist the Bar Pro Bono Unit and with a range of other advisers. Their impressive achievements are set out in the pages that follow. I pay tribute to their valuable work and wish them another highly successful year.

The Attorney General
Rt Hon Lord Goldsmith

Chair's Report

I am delighted to introduce our Annual Report which sets out the Bureau's achievements this year. The highlights are as follows:

We were honoured by a visit from Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal, patron of Citizens Advice

As the contents of this Report make clear the Bureau has continued to provide valuable help to very large numbers of litigants in person and others finding themselves in the Royal Courts of Justice

For the second year running the Bureau passed its Legal Services Commission Specialist Quality Mark audit unconditionally, an endorsement of our high and consistent standards

The Bureau has carried out a detailed review of its role, operations and strategy. A Strategy Group has been set up to ensure that the Bureau has its operations and future plans continuously under review

Our partnership with the Home Office on the Miscarriages for Justice project was launched by Hilary Benn MP and the foundations for its future success have been laid.

The Bureau has received numerous visits from distinguished guests including this year Lady Justice Chew from the High Court of Hong Kong The Bureau suffered the setback of the loss of its grant following a reorganisation of the Association of London Government, until now one of its prime sponsors. We are however taking immediate steps to improve the Bureau's financial position. We are launching an appeal, taking a range of measures to raise additional funds and have established a permanent Fund Raising Committee.

The strength of the Bureau lies in the enormous dedication and hard work provided day in and day out by the staff and volunteers who support them. We thank and congratulate them for another outstanding year.

**The Rt. Hon. Lady Justice Hale
DBE, Chair**

Bureau Director's Report

This has been an exciting year of change and development. We took the brave step of organising the Strategy Day. This has helped us to take stock of our successes, address issues of leadership, organisation and culture and plan the service for the next five years. This has been a useful process and it is still ongoing.

Unfortunately this year, we had to endure the loss of financial support from the Association of London Government. This undoubtedly will have a grave impact on service delivery, particularly in relation to generalist advice. We have formed a fundraising sub-committee, which is exploring other routes to funding.

We have made a step change in developing our profile with many high profile events including the launch of the Miscarriage of Justice Project and in particular the visit by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal. This event can be seen as a 'springboard' for the Bureau's marketing and public relations strategy. We have some exciting events planned for next year.

We continue to work in partnership with other leading pro bono providers. With the Bar Pro Bono Unit by way of the Court of Appeal Representation Scheme we can ensure that every un-represented litigant who has received permission to appeal, is represented on a pro bono basis. We continue to complement other pro bono initiatives through our extensive Honorary Legal Adviser scheme, student and secretarial pro bono schemes. Throughout the year these schemes have provided a high quality service to un-represented litigants and the Court Service.

With regard to social policy, we are able to exercise our influence at the highest level as a result of our representation on the Civil Justice Council, and we continue to set legal precedents through our record number of reported cases.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following for their financial support during 2002-2003:

Association of London Government
Legal Services Commission
Citizens Advice
The Home Office
The RCJ Trust
and all our individual donors.

This exciting year would not have been successful without the dedication of the Trustee Board, the sub-committees, the Honorary Legal Advisers, the pro bono secretaries, the students and the support staff from the participating firms. I would particularly like to thank our Chair the Rt. Hon. Lady Justice Brenda Hale DBE, David Mackie QC, Graham Huntley, Michael Smyth, Robin Knowles QC, Bob Nightingale MBE, Paula Hodges, John Hine, Alan Carpenter, Julia Bates, Laura Franklin, Anne-Marie McRoberts, Maureen Long, Isabelle Mankenda, Amarjit Kaur and of course, the Bureau staff.

Joy Julien
Bureau Director

25 Years of providing access to Justice

In the last twenty-five years the Bureau has advised in many cases where important legal principles have been established.

These are but a few recent examples:

The Court of Appeal has the power to set aside its own final Order in circumstances where new evidence has come to light that casts doubt on the merits of the Order and where to allow the Order to stand would in the light of the new evidence, be an affront to Justice. Before this case it was a universally held belief that the only way to set aside an Order of the Court of Appeal was through appeal to the House of Lords.

In circumstances where a party has without sufficient cause resisted an opportunity to try and resolve a dispute via mediation but has instead elected to proceed through the courts, this could give rise to serious costs consequences for that party at the conclusion of the case.

Litigants in Person are under no duty to provide the court with a skeleton argument even when they have undertaken to do so. They are entitled to have applications for permission to appeal determined at oral hearings and not simply on the papers. They are entitled to have transcripts of their Judgments provided at public expense if they are in receipt of benefit.

All appeal courts, not only the Court of Appeal, are strictly limited to consideration on points of law. Appeal courts should not simply rehear evidence of the case. Trial by jury in cases of libel or slander is a fundamental constitutional right which cannot be limited or taken away.

An individual who has brought a case in an Employment Tribunal is absolutely entitled to a representative of his or her own choice. An Employment Tribunal (unlike a court) cannot prevent such an individual from being represented by someone whom the Employment Tribunal may not want.

The discretion under Part 2 of Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 which granted rights of audience and rights to conduct litigation should only be exceptionally exercised in favour of individuals who make a practice of seeking to represent or otherwise assist unrepresented litigants. An abuse of such rights amounts to an interference with the proper processes of the Administration of Justice and in such cases the Court of Appeal is empowered to make orders restricting such individuals appearing in the RCJ.

Leading the way in Pro Bono Initiatives

The RCJ Advice Bureau has been at the forefront of the development of legal pro bono work in the last twenty-five years.

Today the Bureau works closely with fifty-seven law firms. It is estimated that the firms provide up to two million pounds worth of free advice and assistance to Litigants in Person in the Royal Courts of Justice and the Principal Registry of the Family Division.

The firms assist the Bureau's clients in many different ways including:

- Providing solicitors to see clients on our open door advice sessions
- Giving advice on all aspects of their litigation and enabling them to progress their cases.
- Seeing clients on appointment if their case requires specialist advice.
- Giving written advice.
- Preparing clients' document bundles for their appeals to the Court of Appeal.
- Providing secretaries to assist our Duty Solicitors.
- Providing Costs Draughtsmen to assist clients in disputing their bills.

This year we are proud to say that one of our Honorary Legal Advisers Nerissa Warner O'Neil, one of the team of advisers from Mayer, Brown, Rowe and Maw won the Young Solicitors Group Pro Bono Award. She says: "Advising at the Bureau provides invaluable experience to both the HLA and the trainee in fields including and beyond those usually encountered in our commercial practice allowing us to broaden our own knowledge base and experience.

Work as an HLA for the Bureau in the Royal Courts of Justice is mentally demanding. It can range from reassuring and advising an LIP prior to a court appearance (including providing an explanation as of what to expect procedurally, physically, visually and emotionally when addressing the Court) to assisting with the completion of a Notice of Appeal, Application Notice or other Court documents. One of the most difficult aspects of the work is advising a client that their case has no or very little hope of success, as LIP clients are often emotionally involved with the proceedings.

We are sometimes requested by the Bureau to take on longer term advisory commitments. In September 2001 the Bureau requested assistance with an LIP who had brought an action in negligence against a former solicitor and on obtaining default judgment was ordered to prepare a Schedule of Loss to enable the assessment of damages. The client was not in a position to employ a solicitor to assist and, given the combination of the procedural requirements, the number of documents and the nature of damages claimed, was unable to prepare a satisfactory schedule without assistance. Julie Dickins (the firm's bono co-ordinator) and I met with the client in order to understand the background to the claim following which we prepared a comprehensive Schedule of Loss and supporting evidence. We were later pleased to hear that the client had been awarded £50,000."

Case Studies

Case Study 1

The Bureau played an important role in assisting both the Court of Appeal and a litigant involved in a major divorce case that concerned issues of foreign jurisdiction. Our client was the wife of a very wealthy African businessman. She brought divorce proceedings against her husband in this country. The divorce proceedings were fiercely contested and after several years of ongoing litigation in which the client had spent all her savings in legal fees the husband obtained an Order for the transfer of the case to Nigeria. The wife sought to appeal this Order to the Court of Appeal and was granted permission by the Court of Appeal to do so. The husband took exception to this and applied to the Court of Appeal for the Lord Justice who had granted the wife permission to appeal to be excluded from the constitution of the Court of Appeal that would decide the appeal. By this time the wife was no longer able to pay solicitors and was representing herself. She was also very heavily in debt. At the suggestion of the Civil Appeals Office she contacted the Bureau. She was initially very suspicious of the service the Bureau had to offer since she had never before heard of help being provided by lawyers to un-represented litigants pro bono. She even thought at one point that we might have some connection with her husband.

We contacted her various creditors and were able to persuade them to withhold from further action pending the decision of the Court of Appeal. We also arranged via the Bar Pro Bono Unit for senior Counsel to represent the litigant at the hearings in the Court of Appeal of her husband's application for the exclusion from the hearing of the appeal of the Lord Justice who had granted her permission to appeal and at the hearing of the appeal itself. We also arranged for solicitors to act for her initially on a pro bono basis. The outcome was that the Court of Appeal dismissed the husband's application to exclude from the constitution that would hear the appeal the Lord Justice who had granted our client permission to appeal.

At a subsequent hearing the Court of Appeal also allowed our client's appeal thereby ensuring that the divorce case would continue in this country. Orders were also made whereby the husband was obliged to make payments to our client that were sufficient to enable her to instruct her solicitors for the remainder of the case on a private client basis.

Case Study 2

The client is a miscarriage of justice victim, who was wrongly imprisoned for 14 years and was released in December 2001. On release, he was suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He claimed Jobseekers Allowance for a period of time and was then given an interim payment by the Home Office. He sought advice from the Jobcentre and was told that he was not entitled to claim any benefits because of this payment. They were aware of the fact that he was suffering from PTSD and should have advised him at this point to claim Incapacity Benefit (ICB), which is not means tested, and entitlement is dependent on the claimant's National Insurance history.

Since March 2001 people who have had their convictions quashed are entitled to be awarded National Insurance contributions for the period they were incarcerated. The client should have been advised to either sign on for credits on release or claim ICB. When he approached the project in July 2003, he was advised that he should try and claim ICB. There are two NI conditions for entitlement to ICB. For miscarriage of justice victims, the first condition is relaxed, allowing NI contributions paid in any year prior to imprisonment to be taken into account, rather than in the last three years. The client qualified under this condition, but fell down on the second which requires that a person must have been credited with a certain number of credits in the last two tax years preceding the relevant benefit year. In this client's case, he had not signed on for credits since he was released in December 2001, so would not qualify.

We felt that this situation was very unjust, as he had not been advised on release of the importance of signing on for credits, or claiming ICB due to his medical condition. The client was advised to make a claim for ICB anyway so that the Bureau could appeal the decision. He was initially turned down on the basis of failing the first condition. However, having pointed out to the Department for Work and Pensions that the first condition is relaxed for miscarriage of justice victims, he then failed under the second condition. We then asked that the DwP exercise its discretion and award NI credits for the period since he was released on the basis that he was incorrectly advised. They agreed to this and have awarded the client ICB from July 2003. He now also has a complete NI credit history, which will also count towards his state pension.

The Bureau have been advised by the firm of solicitors preparing his compensation claim for wrongful imprisonment, that the ICB will not be deducted from his final award as far as they are aware.

Case Study 3

Our client is a single mother in receipt of benefit. She had come to London with her two children after she lost her job in Manchester and after the mortgage lender had repossessed the family home in Manchester. The client had also been abandoned by her husband.

The client's local authority placed the client and her family in temporary accommodation in a flat in a council estate. However under the strain of recent events the client's mental health started to break down. She contacted her local health authority and received treatment as a mental health patient.

The client's mental health finally collapsed completely after a fire in her flat in which her younger son was nearly killed. The client convinced herself that the fire had been started deliberately. Eventually the client was sectioned under the Mental Health Act and her younger son was taken into local authority care.

The client had by this time become extremely suspicious of all professionals and over the course of subsequent care proceedings dismissed each and every solicitor who agreed to act for her. By the time the client came into contact with the Bureau at the suggestion of the Court of Appeal (where the case had by then gone) the client was unrepresented in the case and the only advice she was receiving was from a legal help agency run by other litigants in person none of whom were legally qualified to provide advice and whose advice to the client was often wrong. By this time the client's relations with the local authority and with her younger son's guardian had deteriorated to an extraordinary degree and her level of contact with her son had been reduced to just one telephone call a fortnight.

We were gradually able to gain the client's confidence and were able to help her with the arduous task of rebuilding her relationship with the local authority and with her child's guardian. Initially we were able to agree arrangements for a substantial increase in the client's contact with her son. We were also able to persuade the client to submit to various psychiatric tests. The eventual outcome of all of this was that the client's son was returned to her and the family was reunited.

We were also able to guide the client through the ongoing care proceedings in the High Court. We attended with the client the final hearing of the case in the High Court at which a Supervision Order was made, which as a result lasted for just 90 minutes instead of the four full days for which it had been listed.

We were also able to arrange for the local authority to provide the client and her family with a council flat that has ensured that they now have permanent housing. We were also able to persuade the local authority to pay for the family to have a short summer holiday in Malta (the first holiday the family has had together for several years).

We are also engaged in ongoing discussions with the local authority for the client to be provided with therapy, something that has been strongly urged by the Court. The client herself is anxious to have this therapy.

Case Study 4

The client came to the Bureau for advice following a Bankruptcy Order made against her for alleged Council Tax arrears of £8,166.37 owed to a London local authority for the periods from 1995 to 2003 on a property which the client owns.

The client had not lived in the property in question since July 1992 because her son who lived with her and has mental health problems was frequently violent towards her and her daughter and as a result the client and her daughter moved out of the property. The client has since lived in privately rented accommodation, as the local authority could not assist her with housing, as she is a property owner. The client did inform the council tax department of the situation and that only her son was living in the property and they apparently agreed to amend their records and send the Council Tax demands to her son.

Since July 1992 client has only returned to the property on occasions when her son was arrested and the police needed an appropriate adult present to represent him.

The client only found out about the bankruptcy once the Order had been made and her bank accounts had been frozen. When the client attended a meeting with the Official Receiver and explained the circumstances surrounding the Bankruptcy Order they suggested she seek advice from the RCJ Advice Bureau.

The Bureau assisted the client with applying for an annulment of the Bankruptcy Order on the grounds that proper procedures had not been followed, as client had not lived at the address where the Statutory Demand and Bankruptcy Petition had been sent and no attempt had been made to bring the proceedings to the client's attention.

The Bureau is further assisting the client with challenging her liability to pay the Council Tax arrears for the periods in question.

The Court annulled the client's bankruptcy on the basis that the Order should never have been made.

User Feedback

- ❖ "I visited your Advice Bureau on Tuesday the 9th September 2003 and I would like to thank you for the care and consideration shown by your staff to my husband and myself. We arrived at your office as a sorry couple in a state of some despair at the non-progress of my case (over a period of three years) and not knowing where to go or who to turn to for advice and assistance. After being made aware of our rights by one of your brilliant young advisers we left your bureau transformed into a happy confident and 'motivated' team prepared to take whatever action that was required to end my four year ordeal."
- ❖ "You may already know that on Friday 6th December a major part of my court case came to a successful conclusion. It followed years of hard work for me, but the dedicated help, the staff of the bureau gave me, was and is incalculable. I mostly appreciate the belief in my cause, which was very private to me, yet was also very public. The service of your bureau is highly appreciated by many of its clients, as I am authorised to say from talking to many people while sitting in your waiting room, many of which I have come to know. I wish you many more years of such wonderful, important and courteous service."
- ❖ "No improvement necessary. This lady is a star -a good listener and gave first class advice on all my queries."
- ❖ "I cannot thank the CAB enough in assisting me in preparing trial bundles and arranging for me to see a lawyer for general advice. I am awaiting permission to appeal to bring my youngest child home and have no legal representation. Thank you so much!"
- ❖ "I am very impressed and happy with the information and advice that I received in this office. It's exceptional and far beyond my expectations. The RCJ Advice Bureau was recommended to me by a friend of mine who also was very satisfied with the services it offers. The staff are pleasant, dedicated and helpful at all times."
- ❖ "Your services are obviously greatly needed -when all else has failed. Please continue to provide this unique caring service."

The Miscarriages of Justice Project

The Bureau's Miscarriages of Justice Project was officially launched by Hilary Benn in January 2003. The aim of the Project is to assist victims of miscarriages of justice, who have often spent many years in prison, to resettle in the community.

The Project advisers work closely with the clients starting prior to their release and providing support at their hearing. On their release assistance is given on all practical issues, including housing, benefits and money management.

Victims of miscarriages of justice often suffer from severe mental trauma. The Project hosted a seminar in April, the first of its kind, attended by experts in the field to look at how to address the mental health needs of victims of miscarriage of justice.

The Bureau Director and Deputy Director With the Prisons Minister Hilary Benn at the launch of the Miscarriage of Justice Project

The Project is assisted in developing its work by a Steering Group made up of individuals with a special interest in the area of miscarriages of Justice. They are:

Ms Marolyn Burgess -Citizens Advice
Ms Kulvinder Gill, Hodge Jones and Allen, Solicitors
Dr Adrian Grounds -Cambridge University
Mr John Hine -RCJ Advice Bureau Trustee Board
Dr James MacKeith -Bethlem Royal and Maudsley Hospitals
Cllr Sally Mulready -London Borough of Hackney Council
Dame Ruth Runciman -Central and NW London Mental Health NHS Trust

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Steering Group for their support during the first year of the Project.

Statistics of Service Take-up

The Bureau maintains statistical records detailing service take-up. The statistics are analysed in terms of the numbers of clients seen, borough of origin and the nature of the enquiries.

Client contact - Total

November 2002 - October 2003

	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Total
Personal	592	394	522	542	548	546	497	580	633	620	607	597	6678
Telephone	122	51	86	104	112	106	139	122	131	59	143	143	1318
Letters	229	106	142	191	287	234	246	196	304	104	191	148	2378
Total	943	551	750	837	947	886	882	898	1068	783	941	888	10374

Clients seen by Honorary Legal Advisers (HLAs) - Total

November 2002 - October 2003

2246

Breakdown of enquiries - Total

November 2002 - October 2003

	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Total
Benefits	221	21	73	115	287	97	162	100	146	19	204	225	1670
Consumer	254	144	150	132	181	158	124	135	131	53	92	90	1644
Employment	33	12	61	59	25	44	18	32	14	8	26	34	366
Housing	78	39	70	69	71	78	71	45	56	56	72	76	781
Legal	528	336	468	515	560	531	590	440	643	447	433	585	6076
Family	18	7	10	15	26	22	13	6	14	10	11	7	159
Tax	13	16	8	10	11	3	5	8	11	4	8	23	120
Utilities	2	0	5	3	4	2	1	7	8	5	7	19	63
Immigration	8	2	23	10	7	15	16	17	7	7	8	9	129
Misc.	20	14	28	70	46	114	118	176	16	5	4	5	616
Total	1175	591	896	998	1218	1064	1118	996	1046	614	865	1073	11654

Treasurer's Report

The work of the Bureau continues to expand and the rising number of clients continues to put a strain on the resources of the Bureau.

Efforts to raise additional funds on behalf of the Bureau have continued, these efforts have become additionally urgent given the withdrawal of funding by the Association of London Government in the current year.

Alan Carpenter/Raj Parker

Our core funders, the Association of London Government, Citizens Advice, the Legal Services Commission and the RCJ Charitable Trust, continued to finance our cash requirements particularly employee expenses during the year. The demerger of the Personal Support Unit took place on 1 April 2002. All surplus funds donated to fund the unit were transferred to the new charity formed to run the unit.

The Bureau's accounts have been audited and approved for the year 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003.

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2003

Incoming Resources	Total 2003	Total 2002
	£	£
Grants	451,479	225,265
Fees for services provided	113,707	
Donations	3,873	58,181
Gross deposit interest	1,363	2,099
Other income	967	3,395
Total incoming resources	457,682	402,647
Resources Expended		
Direct charitable expenditure	396,208	382,688
Operating expenses	52,516	30,785
Total resources expended	448,724	413,473
Net Incoming resources for the year	8,958	(10,826)
Fund balances brought forward	72,108	82,934
Fund balances carried forward	81,066	72,108

Key Events -The Bureau's History

1978

The Bureau is set up upon the initiative of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Elwyn-Jones, to help bridge the glaring gap in legal services left by the changes in the Legal Aid system.

1982

The Bureau becomes a registered member of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB).

1987

Pamela Lloyd-Hart becomes Bureau Manager and commences plans to develop a specialist legal advice service, which will operate on a Friday and will be staffed by solicitors. The Free Representation Unit (FRU) and the Bar in general will also provide assistance. This will represent the beginning of a formal Honorary Legal Advisers (HLA) project in the Bureau.

1988

The Bureau Manager attends the first meeting of the Court of Appeal (Civil Division) User Committee.

1991

Visit from the Patron H.R.H. The Princess Royal.

1994

The Working Party established by the Judges Council under the Rt. Hon. Lord Justice Otton is formed with a brief to consider the advice and assistance required by LIPs in the Royal Courts of Justice.

The Bureau recognises the pressing need for legally qualified volunteers to offer pro bono advice during court hours and a plan to improve the service to LIPs is presented to the Rt. Hon. Lord Justice Otton.

The Interim Report recommends that the CAB service in the RCJ be increased to five days a week, and that the service be enhanced by the establishment of a pro bono scheme from both the Bar and Solicitors.

1996

The Bureau is awarded a grant from the Lord Chancellor's Department to fund two full time solicitors and a part time administrator.

The Bureau enhances its pro bono scheme to include five City law firms Allen & Overy, Clifford Chance, Freshfields, Linklaters & Alliance and Lovell White Durrant.

1997

Cherie Booth QC is the key note speaker at our Annual General Meeting.

1998

Joy Julien is appointed Bureau Manager.

The Pro Bono Scheme expands as 22 City law firms join the scheme. The Bureau operates a 'drop in' advice session throughout the day five days a week to improve access.

The Lord Chancellor's Department commissions an independent review of the Bureau's service to LIPs and concludes: "The majority of clients in our survey had all their questions answered and were completely satisfied with the advice..."

The Lord Chancellor holds a reception at the House of Lords in aid of the RCJ Trust.

The Bureau Manager is invited to train barristers in the Cameroon on setting up pro bono clinics.

The Bureau obtains new premises in the Principal Registry of the Family Division in First Avenue House, Holborn. The Bureau sets up pro bono family law sessions at this branch, with the help of 30 firms.

1999

The Bureau develops its bundling service for LIPs with Court of Appeal cases.

Judge Kajei Rokumoto of Japan meets with the Bureau Manager for advice on setting up a similar project in Japan.

Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss opens the new site at the Principal Registry of the Family Division.

2000

The Bureau holds a reception in the presence of the Lord Chancellor in the Lord Chief Justice's Court to thank Bureau staff and HLAs for their commitment to the work of the Bureau.

2001

The Master of the Rolls visits the Bureau and stresses that: "the Royal Courts of Justice could not survive without the help of the Bureau".

The Bureau establishes, in partnership with the Bar Pro Bono Unit, the Court of Appeal representation scheme.

RCJ Advice Bureau - Annual Report 2002-2003
Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal visits the Bureau to thank Bureau staff, volunteers and funders for their support.

2003

The Bureau launches the Miscarriages of Justice Project with a reception in the presence of the Rt. Hon. Hilary Benn, Minister for Prisons. The Lord Chief Justice is among the guests.

The Rt. Hon. Lord Justice Brook visits the Bureau to thank the staff for assisting the Court of Appeal in its work.

Mr. Justice Wall describes the Bureau as "an extremely valuable service operating within the RCJ".

One of our HLAs, Nerissa Warner-O'Neill wins an award from the Young Solicitors Group for her work on one of our cases and kindly donates her prize of £1,000 to the Bureau.

HRH Princess Anne meets the Bureau staff.

2002

The Bureau establishes a pro bono secretarial rota to assist advisers in the Bureau. This is an opportunity for the non-legal staff in the law firms to participate in the work of the Bureau.

The Bureau passes its Community Legal Services Specialist Quality Mark Audit with no non-compliances. The auditor states: "... I have never carried out an audit where there were no non-compliances".

Allen & Overy hosts a reception in the presence of the Attorney General, Lord Goldsmith QC, to thank staff, volunteers and funders for their contribution to the Bureau's success.

The Bureau Director and Deputy Director meet with Michael Napier, the Attorney General's special envoy on Pro Bono matters, to discuss the work of the Bureau.

Trustee Board Members

Trustees

Rt. Hon. Lady Justice Hale DBE -Chair
David Mackie QC -Vice Chair
Jonathan Rushworth -Secretary
Raj Parker -Treasurer
Graham Huntley
Kevin Perry
Peter Williamson
Alan Walls
Robin Knowles QC
Bob Nightingale MBE
Jonn Hine
Alan Carpenter
Joy Julien -Bureau Director
Sarah Blake-Purvis -Staff Representative

Legal Services Sub-Committee Members

Michael Smyth
David Smythe
Alan Walls
Maggie Rae
Sunil Gadhia
Michael Barnett
David Mackie QC
Valerie Davies
Ann Robinson
John Hine
Joy Julien -Bureau Director

Employment & Finance Sub-Committee Members

Nick Atkins -Chair
Paula Hodges
Raj Parker
Kevin Perry
Alex Carruthers
Felicity Kirk
Alan Carpenter
Mark Elvy
Fiona Turner
Joy Julien -Bureau Director

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following who have donated their precious time to the Bureau during 2001/2002:

CIVIL LITIGATION

Allen & Overy
Anderson & Co
Ashurst Morris Crisp
Baker & McKenzie
Balsara & Co
Barlow Lyde & Gilbert
Clifford Chance LLP
Clyde & Co
Davies Arnold Cooper
Dechert
Denton Wilde Sapte
Kendall Freeman
DLA
Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer
Herbert Smith
Kingsley Napley
Linklaters & Alliance
Lovells
Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw
Norton Rose
Simmons & Simmons
S J Berwin
Slaughter and May
Stephenson Harwood
Weil Gotshal Manges
White Case

FAMILY LAW

Aitken Kelly Associates
Anthony Gold Lerman Muirhead
Barnett Sampson
Bindman & Partners
Campbell Hooper
Charles Russell
Clintons
Collyer Bristow
Creighton & Partners
Davenport Lyons
Family Law in Partnership
Farrer & Co
Harter & Loveless
Hodge, Jones & Allen
Hughes, Fowler & Carruthers
Hunters Solicitors
J B Wheatley & Co
Jennings Son & Ash
Kingsley Napley

Lass Salt Garvin
Manches & Co
Michael Fisher Solicitors
Miles Preston & Co
Pedro Emanuel
Reynolds Porter Chamberlain
Roberta Tish Solicitors
T V Edwards
Venters
Withers
WPF Glasner Gerber Shapiro
YVA

We would also like to express our gratitude to the following funders for their financial support:

Association of London Government
Citizens Advice
Legal Services Commission
RCJ Charitable Trust

RCJ Advice Bureau - Annual Report 2002-2003 RCJ Advice Bureau - Annual Report 2002-2003

The RCJ Advice Bureau is run by lawyers in conjunction with the Citizens Advice Bureau and is independent of the court.

We Provide

Free, Confidential, Impartial legal & procedural advice & assistance to everyone regardless of their race, gender, sexuality or disability.

Location

We have two branches:

Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC2A 2LL

Monday to Friday 10.00am - 1.00pm & 2.00pm - 5.00pm

All civil cases are dealt with at this branch e.g. Procedural Advice and Preparation of Court of Appeal Documents

Principal Registry of the Family Division, Fourth Floor, First Avenue House, 42-49 High Holborn, London WC1V 6NP

Monday to Friday 10.00am - 1.00pm & 2.00pm - 5.00pm

All matrimonial matters and general advice e.g. Consumer, Debt, Employment, Housing, Immigration and Welfare Benefits cases are dealt with at this branch.

Lawyers specialising in Family Law will be available on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays to provide advice and assistance in:

Adoption, Abduction, Care Proceedings, Children, Court Procedure, Divorce, Domestic Violence, Mediation and Property.

Telephone Advice Line

Telephone advice is available on all subjects.

Legal Advice -Monday, Wednesday and Friday 11.00am -12.00pm