Dear members,

From this issue onwards, the Hong Kong Bar Association will combine its two regular publications (the Bar Newsletter and BUZZ) into one single publication.

It is hoped that by so doing, the Bar can focus and optimise its resources. The publication will cover matters of special interest to young barristers, as well as of interest to the general membership of the Bar as a whole. It can also serve as the “external face” of the Bar and provide outsiders (be it lay members of the public, or overseas lawyers) with an overview of what has been happening at the Hong Kong Bar.

A lot has happened since the last edition of the Bar Newsletter.

On the front of professional development for its members, we have organised and collaborated in numerous training programs and courses, ranging from prosecution in the criminal courts to training for cases concerning the Convention against Torture and other Cruel Inhuman and Degrading Treatment (which is becoming an important source of work). Advocacy and Advanced Legal Education courses are provided for pupils. Through their guest lectures, visiting counsel from London continued to share with our members the latest developments in areas which are of mutual interest to the United Kingdom and Hong Kong.

On the subject of lectures and talks, two deserve special mention. In November 2013, Michael Thomas SC delivered a talk to members (with Russell Coleman SC and Mr Justice Tung PJ as panelists) on the topic of “Problems of the modern advocate” during which he shared with members his views in the change of advocacy practice during his 50 years at the Bar.
In April this year, the Bar collaborated with the Judiciary and the Faculty of Law of University of Oxford in hosting a lecture given by Professor Timothy Endicott, Dean of the Oxford Law Faculty, on “Judges and basic laws in Hong Kong and Europe”. Both talks attracted a huge turnout.

On a lighter side, our regular seasonal drinks party (summer and Christmas) continue to attract members from all levels of seniority as well as judges and magistrates. Participants mingled in a relaxed and casual setting.

The Bar has taken part in a number of international legal conferences and events: the Presidents of Law Associations in Asia (“POLA”) annual conference 2013 held in Tokyo, the Opening of the Legal Year ceremony in London in October 2013, the Union Internationale des Avocats Annual Congress in Macau in October/November 2013, LawAsia Conference 2013 in Singapore in October 2013, the International Bar Association Annual Conference 2013 in Boston in October 2013, the POLA Annual Conference 2014 held in Wellington, New Zealand, to name but a few. Through participating and speaking at such events, not only can the Hong Kong Bar keep abreast of legal and professional developments in other countries, it can also inform and update the international legal community as to the latest situation of the legal system in Hong Kong.

We have also received a number of overseas visitors and delegations, from such diverse jurisdictions as Mainland China, India, Uzbekistan, Republic of Bhutan, Taiwan, Italy and the United States of America. Most recently we have also met the Honourable Lord Justice Tomlinson, Treasurer of the Honourable Society of Inner Temple, on his visit to Hong Kong.

In terms of Mainland relationships, I led a delegation on behalf of the Hong Kong Bar to visit Beijing last October/November and met with various Government and professional bodies. In June this year the Bar collaborated with Peking University School of Law in organising a common law course for Peking University law students. This is the fourth year in which the program has run and 15 students were awarded scholarship to attend a two-week exchange program in Hong Kong where they spent time with barristers’ chambers to observe first hand how the common law system operated.

The Hong Kong Bar Association plays the important role of an advocate in matters concerning public interest and the Rule of Law, without fear or favour, and without partisan considerations or influence. The Rule of Law, especially the concept of the Independence of the Judiciary, is a value that is treasured in any civilised community. Due to Hong Kong’s peculiar political and constitutional setting, the Rule of Law and judicial independence takes on a special significance in Hong Kong. Over the course of 2013 and 2014 the Hong Kong Bar Association issued a number of public statements on various topics of legal and constitutional importance, with the more recent ones of which concerning the important topics of constitutional development as well as judicial independence. It is through vigilantly safeguarding our fundamental values that Hong Kong can remain unique in this region. As the Honourable Mr. Andrew Li, the former Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal, quoted in an article published on 15th August 2014, “eternal vigilance is the price of liberty”.

The Hong Kong Bar Association is honoured to be presented by Mr. Li with a copy of the book “Hong Kong’s Court of Final Appeal” edited by Professors Simon Young and Yash Ghai. The book is a timely reminder of the contribution of the Court of Final Appeal to the maintenance of the Rule of Law in Hong Kong. Mr. Li’s presentation of the book to us is a welcome recognition of the role played by an independent Bar in Hong Kong.

Paul Shieh SC
Chairman

親愛的會員，

由本期起，香港大律師公會的兩份定期刊物《The Bar Newsletter》和《BUZZ》將合併成為一份由公會出版刊物。

香港大律師公會希望透過此刊物合併集中和優化本會的資源。此出版刊物將涵蓋特別深受新晉大律師關注的問題，以及受整體會員關心的事項。此出版刊物更是香港大律師公會為外界，不論是大眾市民或外地律師，提供有關香港大律師公會的概況和資訊的重要工具。

由上期大律師刊物發放至今，發生了不少值得一提的事情。
在專業發展方面，我們為公會會員組織了眾多培訓計劃和課程，從刑事法庭辯控，到有關《禁止酷刑和其他殘忍，不人道或有辱人格的待遇或處罰公約》案件的培訓，此類案件亦將成為重要的工作來源。本會亦為實習大律師提供辯論和高級法律進修課程。從倫敦來港訪問之大律師也曾透過講座和本會會員分享兩地法律界關注的法律議題的發展情況。

其中有兩次講座特別值得在此一提。在2013年11月，唐明治資深大律師向本會會員發表講話，就「現代大律師常見問題」一議題，向大家分享他當大律師50年的經驗，和對此行業的見解。是次講話由高浩文資深大律師與終審法院前任法官鄭國楨為專題討論小組成員。今年四月，大律師公會更與香港司法機構和英國牛津大學合作舉辦講座，由牛津大學法學院院長Timothy Endicott就「香港與歐洲之法官與基本法」一議題作講話。這兩次的講座都大受會員歡迎。

此外，本會的夏季和聖誕酒會亦繼續吸引各級資歷的成員以及不同級別的法官及裁判官參加。參與者在輕鬆休閒的氛圍下聚會。

律師公會亦有參與多項國際性法律研討會和活動，包括在東京舉行的2013亞洲律師會長協會（Presidents of Law Associations in Asia “POLA”）屆年會；於2013年10月在倫敦舉行的法律年度開幕典禮；於2013年10月至11月國際大律師聯盟在澳門舉行的年度會議；於2013年10月在新加坡舉行的亞太區法律協會會議；於2013年10月在美國波士頓舉行的國際大律師協會年會；在新西蘭惠靈頓舉行的2014 POLA屆年會等。透過參與以上同類型的活動，香港大律師公會不但可了解其他國家的法律和專業發展，同時亦可讓外界了解香港法律制度的最新情況。

本會亦迎接了多個外地代表團來香港作交流，包括来自中國大陸、印度、烏茲別克斯坦、不丹共和國、台灣、比利時和美國的代表。最近，身兼內殿律師學院司庫的Lord Justice Tomlinson大法官來港訪問的時候，我們也有和他會面。

在中港兩地關係方面，我於去年11月至12月頒發了一期香港大律師公會代表訪問北京，會見了各政府部門和專業機構的人員。在今年六月香港大律師公會更與北京大學法律學院合作，為北京大學生開辦了普通法課程。這課程計劃已經是第四年舉辦，其中更有15名學生獲頒獎學金到香港參加一個兩星期的交流計劃，期間更有機會參觀大律師事務所，親身體驗普通法制度的運作。

香港大律師公會有關公共利益和法治的問題上，充當詮釋人的角色，不偏不倚，無私無偏。法治，特別是司法獨立，在任何文明社會中都是非常重的原則。基因香港的特殊政治及憲法環境，法治和司法獨立在香港人心目中俱有更大的意義和重要性。在2013年至2014年期間，香港大律師公會發表了多份有關具有法律和憲法重要性議題的公開聲明，近期的聲明更特別針對政制發展及司法獨立。香港能保持獨特的優勢是有賴持著警惕的態度維護基本價值觀，正如前終審法院首席法官李國能在刊登於2014年8月15日的一篇文章的引述：「自由的代價就是無休的警惕。」

香港大律師公會很榮幸能夠獲李國能先生贈送由楊艾文教授及及日思教授所編的《香港終審法院》。本書提醒了我們，終審法院對於維護香港法治維護貢獻。李國能先生贈送的這本書亦象徵著對香港大律師在香港所適當的重要角色的認同。

石永泰資深大律師
主席
Visit to Beijing 北京訪談
31 October — 1 November 2013
“Problems of the Modern Advocate”, 14 November 2013
現代大律師常見問題

Visit: The Korean Bar Association, 11 March 2014
韓國大律師公會訪談

Talk by Lord Justice Tomlinson, 11 August 2014
內殿律師學院司庫講話

Visit: The Delegation from Bhutan led by the Attorney General of Bhutan, 31 December 2013
不丹共和國訪談
Talk by Professor Endicott, 20 March 2014
“Judges and basic laws in Hong Kong and Europe”
《香港與歐洲之法官與基本法》
Hong Kong and Mainland China have been fostering their relationships over the years. Needless to say, Hong Kong people should learn more about our country. However, in all relationships, understanding should be mutual. We also want our Mainland counterparts to learn more about our values and system so that our mutual understanding would not be based on assumptions – because assumptions are the termites of relationships.

In order to share our values and system with our Mainland counterparts, the Bar has sent representatives (both senior members and young barristers) to Peking University to teach the Common Law Course between March and June 2014. This has been the fourth year that this Course is taught as part of the LLM programme at Peking University. This year, we have also extended our Course to make it part of their LLB programme for the first time.

Over 60 Peking University students were selected to take this Course after attending an interview by Peking University professors. The content of the Course included the concept of the Rule of Law and Common Law, the court system in Hong Kong, the doctrine of precedent, judicial review and the protection of fundamental rights, international trade dispute resolutions and international commercial arbitration etc.

At the end of the Course, students had to submit an essay on public law or arbitration. They also had to take part in a moot which was based on a heated topic for judicial review – challenging the termination of the legislative debate in response to an attempt to filibuster a bill at the Legislative Council.

Finally, 15 outstanding students were awarded a scholarship by the Bar for a two-week mini-pupillage in Hong Kong with members of the Bar who lectured in the Course. They also visited various law-related institutes.

The Course was very well-received and the students said that they found this experience an invaluable exposure. Some even began to consider developing a career in Hong Kong.

We do hope that this Course has brought another perspective to Mainland China in understanding our legal system and the spirit of the Rule of Law, a value which we hold fast to and take pride in.

Carol Wong
No one can deny that in the past few years arbitration – both in terms of caseload and arbitrator appointments – has grown exponentially in Hong Kong. There is, however, one fact which does not appear in any official statistics: that more than in any other field, the younger generation of lawyers in Hong Kong have been left behind.

“Arbitration for Young Lawyers” (which was held at the HKIAC on 10 June 2014) was a seminar, designed and put together by the YBC and the YSG, with the aim, not of exploring why not more young lawyers are riding the ‘arbitration wave’, but simply to ‘engage’, and for those already having some interest, to ‘mobilise’.

Current chairperson of the HKIAC and arbitration specialist, practising from Des Voeux Chambers, Teresa Cheng SC, kicked off the evening by speaking about the latest developments in international and local arbitration practices. Ms. Cheng also gave attendees some anecdotes from some of the arbitrations in which she had sat as an arbitrator, as well as those in which she had appeared as an advocate – these were valuable insights indeed!

Following Ms. Cheng were our two other guest speakers, Robert Rhoda (Senior Associate with Smyth & Co, in association with RPC) and David Fong (barrister); both, living examples of ‘young’ lawyers who practice in arbitration day-to-day, and are having successful careers in this field. Mr. Rhoda and Mr. Fong took turns to share their personal experiences as to how they got involved in arbitration. They also gave their opinions as to what it would take for the young lawyers of today to be able to have an arbitration practice as successful as theirs.

Although time was called before any questions could be taken, discussions and experience-sharing between attendees went on long into the night – over the customary refreshments and nibbles of course!

The YBC are indebted to all those who helped to make the evening such a success, but in particular the speakers for their invaluable advice, support and commitment to the cause.

Robert Chan

新晉大律師委員會
講座系列：
《給新晉律師的仲裁講座》

近年來，選擇仲裁來解決糾紛的案件按年倍增，不論是案件數量或仲裁員的任命都有上升的趨勢。然而，很多官方的資料都忽略了一點：香港的新晉律師們在仲裁方面，相比其他執業範疇，認知顯得較為落後。

《給新晉律師的仲裁講座》（於2014年6月10日在假香港國際仲裁中心舉行）是一個由新晉大律師委員會和年青律師組共同設計和舉辦的講座。其目的並不在於解構新晉律師極少參與仲裁的原因，而是旨在提升觀眾對仲裁的興趣及鼓勵他們的參與。

現任香港國際仲裁中心主席、仲裁專家及德輔大法律事務所的資深大律師鄭若曦女士，於講座中闡述有關本地和國際仲裁的最新發展。鄭資深大律師亦向在場觀眾，分享了不少有關她作為仲裁員和諮詢人時所見的趣聞。這些都是十分寶貴的經驗分享，相信觀眾們都獲益不少。

除了鄭資深大律師外，主辦單位還邀請到施德偉律師事務所（與RPC聯營）的資深律師Robert Rhoda及方兆文大律師擔任嘉賓。他們雖是新晉律師，但在仲裁方面非常成功，是新晉仲裁律師的最佳例子。Rhoda先生和方先生除了分享了為什麼他們會參與仲裁的個人經歷，亦分享了成為成功仲裁員的心得。

講座完畢後，雖然沒有時間接受台下發問，但形式式的討論和經驗分享徹夜不絕，可見各參與者對仲裁都甚感興趣。

在此，新晉大律師委員會向所有幫忙籌備是次講座的人物致敬。尤其是當天的講者們，感謝他們寶貴的意見、支持和對講座付出。

陳景文大律師
The Annual Dinner Party of the Recreation and Sports Club for Hong Kong Professional Bodies (“RSCP”) was held on 13th June 2014 in the Grand Stage of the Western Market. The theme of the Annual Dinner Party this year was “dancing”. There were various dancing performances throughout the night. The Bar participated in two performances. One of them was a Broadway style group dance jointly performed by members of six professional bodies. The other one was a solo of Waltz performed by Ms. Selina Kung and Mr. Angus Cheung.

Apart from dancing, there were the usual band performances. Mr. Osmond Lam performed with the VIP band, which was composed of former chairpersons and council members of different professional bodies and sang seven songs.

The Guest of Honour was Ms. Guo Jing Jing, former representative of the Chinese National Diving Team and Gold Medals winner in the Olympics. Ms. Guo, being a very successful athlete, shared her experience with the guests and gave inspiring remarks to the sportsmen and sportswomen’s achievements of the RSCP.

There are now seven teams representing the Bar in RSCP tournaments, namely, Basketball, Soccer, Band, Table-tennis, Badminton, Bridge and Snooker. We hereby express our gratitude to the team captains and members who participated in the Dinner Party and their contributions to various teams; we hope all the teams will have splendid performances in the coming year.

Rachael Siu
The International Weekend is an annual conference for young lawyers organised principally by the Junior Lawyers Division of the Law Society of England and Wales in London. We attended the 3 day 2013 conference in September last year and had the privilege of meeting over 40 delegates from across the EU and North America.

The conference opened with addresses from the President of the Law Society and Vice-Chairman of the Bar Council, both of whom reminded us of the importance of actively building cross jurisdictional practices and links across jurisdictions. These were followed by a series of thought provoking seminars on a wide range of topical subjects. Thus, for instance, in a talk on European penal policies, a lawyer from Norway explained to us the liberal approach to punishment there (even the perpetrator of the massacre in 2011, Anders Behring Breivik, could receive no more than a prison sentence of 21 years) and the photos of the prisons he showed us elicited a collective comment that they looked more like holiday resorts than prisons! Amongst other things, we also heard about the inability of EU data protection laws to keep pace with technological developments, the opportunities for in and out bound corporate law work with China and the asylum appeal of the 5 Cameroon boxers who had disappeared during the 2012 Olympics (as told personally by the young barrister instructed on the matter).

The social side of the conference was equally interesting – there was a cycling tour of London, lunch at the Inns of Court, social ping-pong fun and a Tudor style banquet by the Tower. And through these events in particular, we were able to learn about the more personal side of practices in different places (for instance, a young Northern Irish barrister told us that not making any profit for the first 5 years in practice would be considered normal) and make many new friends. Happily, one just got in touch with us earlier this month!

All in all, the conference was memorable for us both and we felt that our attendance was particularly appreciated by the organisers (not least, we assume, as we were the only representatives from Asia!). We thank our Bar Council for generously supporting our participation and hope that YBs will continue attending the event in the years to come.

Selina Kung and Hugh Kam

一年一度的「國際週末」是由英格蘭和威爾斯青年律師組織籌辦的青年律師會議。去年九月，我們參加了為期3日的會議，而且很榮幸有機會接觸到來自歐盟及北美的40多位代表。

這次會議由英格蘭和威爾斯律師會前主席Nicholas Fluck先生以及英格蘭和威爾斯大律師公會主席Nick Lavender御用大律師致閉幕辭，提及積極拓展跨司法管轄區的業務及聯繫的重要性。接著的節目包括一連串以不同範疇為題、發人深省的討論會。例如，在一個有關歐洲刑事政策的講座中，一位來自挪威的律師向我們講解了挪威的自由主義(即使對2011年大屠殺的參與者Anders Behring Breivik，判刑也不能超過21年)，而且由圖片所見監獄的設施，一點都不像監獄，此乎像度假勝地一樣!

除此以外，討論會的議題包括歐盟的資料保護法後於科技發展、社交媒體及法律之間的互動、向中國企業提供國內外法律服務的機遇，以及為2012奧運期間失踪的5位喀麥隆拳擊手的政治庇護上訴申請(並由被委託的年輕大律師親身講述)。
（續）在除了討論以外，其他社交活動也同樣精彩。我們參與了騎自行車遊覽倫敦、由Inns of Court 安排的午餐，青年大律師委員會Young Barristers Committee 舉辦的政會、打乒乓球以及在TOWER OF LONDON的舞會原野風情宴會。在這些活動中，我們認識了多位新朋友，了解到不同地方的風土人情（例如，一位年輕北愛爾蘭律師告訴我們，首5年營業沒有盈餘在當地是正常的現象）。我們也跟這位朋友保持聯繫。
總而言之，這次會議是非常難忘，而且我們也感受到主辦單位對我們的參與的重視（我們是亞洲唯一出席的代表）。我們相信在這愈趨全球化的法律行業

於2013年12月18日，YBC 在區會舉辦了一年一度的聖誕聚會。很多大律師公會的會員及司法界
的成員都有出席，當中包括了終審法院首席法官馬道立，主席石永泰資深大律師及副主席余承章
資深大律師。
當晚最精彩的莫過於期待已久的Bar Band 演奏及一眾特別嘉賓為我們獻唱。歌曲包括"New York State of Mind" 及一些懷舊經典的中英文歌曲"Imagine"、"Words"、"Wonderful Tonight"、"情
人"、"讓一切隨風"，及"難為正邪定分界"。
大家盡興而歸，享受了一晚有豐富美食、音樂、
魔術表演、伴隨著歡笑聲的聚會。

羅慶倫 大律師

On 18 December 2013, the YBC hosted the annual Christmas party at the Fringe Club. The event was well attended by members of the Bar. The Hon. Chief Justice Geoffrey Ma as well as other members of the Judiciary also attended.

The highlight of the night was the highly anticipated live music and singing performances by the Bar Band, who performed songs like "New York State of Mind", along with some classic English and Chinese favourites including "Imagine", "Words", "Wonderful Tonight", "情人", "讓一切隨風", and "難為正邪定分界".

Those who attended surely enjoyed a night of sumptuous snacks, music, magic and laughter.

Alan Lo
The Bar Mess

In honour of
the Hon. Mr. Justice Chan,
GBM, NPJ
at the Hong Kong Club
10 January 2014
二零一四年
一月十日
大律師晚會
This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Hong Kong Bar Association Debating Competition. What made this year exceptionally challenging and exciting was the introduction of a new set of rules for the Competition.

To further enhance the aim of the Competition, namely to promote the awareness of socio-legal issues and the rule of law among secondary school students, we strived to provide the schools with more chances of participation. The rules of the Competition were therefore amended to effect the introduction of a cumulative scoring system in addition to the knockout mode of the Competition. As such, the final round was divided into three categories: Gold, Silver and Bronze. Six schools, as opposed to two in the previous years, were able to participate in the Grand Finals according to their cumulative scores in the preliminary rounds.

This year 20 and 24 teams participated in the Chinese and English divisions respectively. The motions for this year’s Competition, as always, were current and controversial socio-legal issues such as “civil disobedience is justified”, “standard working hours should be legislated”, “香港政府應積極干預香港的樓宇市場”, “現代香港法律的“一男一女”婚姻制度已過時” etc.

The Competition reached its Grand Finals on 29 March 2014. On the English side, the Gold category finals were argued between St. Paul’s Convent School and Diocesan Girls’ School on the motion of “the laws should be tightened to reduce the number of visitors to Hong Kong”. Both sides put forward remarkable arguments in relation to the possible social, economic and political consequences in reducing the number of visitors to Hong Kong. In the Chinese division, Munsang College (Hong Kong Island) and La Salle College argued the same motion “香港應立法收緊訪港人數” and each had an outstanding performance.

In the end, Diocesan Girls’ School and Munsang College (Hong Kong Island) were the champions of their respective divisions. It was our privilege to have the Honourable Chief Justice Ma, the Chief Magistrate Mr. Clement Lee, Mr. Graham Harris SC and Mr. Richard Khaw as the adjudicators of the English finals and Principal Magistrate Mr. Simon Lui, Mr. Paul Shieh SC, Mr. Paul Lam SC, Mr. Andrew Mak and Mr. PY Lo as the adjudicators of the Chinese finals.

It was encouraging to learn that the new set of rules adopted this year received positive comments from the participants. We would convey our congratulations to the winners as well as all the students who have participated. We would also like to thank all the adjudicators and the helpers from the University of Hong Kong. The last ten years of the Competition have been an amazing journey; we are sure that the next decade will be even more exciting!

Ryan Law
香港大律师公会辩论赛

今年的香港大律师公会辩论赛印证著本赛事成立的十週年。而令今届赛事更富挑战性及刺激的是今年的比赛规则有重大的革新。

举办香港大律师公会辩论赛的目的是为了提高中学生对社会法律议题及法治精神的认识，而为了进一步实践这目的我们致力令各参赛队伍有更多参与比赛的机会。因此，我们修改了今届的赛规，在原本的淘汰赛制下加上了累计积分的元素。决赛亦分了金、银及铜三个级别，参与决赛的队伍由以往的两队增加至六队。决赛的三个级别是根据各参赛队伍在初赛的累计分数而决定。

今届辩论赛的中文组别有二十队参与，而英文组别则有二十四队。辩题一如既往是一些近期及具争议性的社会法律议题，如“civil disobedience is justified”，“standard working hours should be legislated”，“香港政府应积极干预香港的楼宇市场”，“现行香港法律的“一男一女”婚姻制度已过时”等。

辩论的总决赛在2014年3月29日举行。英文组的金牌决赛由圣保禄学校及拔萃女书院竞逐，辩题是“the laws should be tightened to reduce the number of visitors to Hong Kong”。两队都提出了不少论点说明收紧访港人数对社会、经济及政治各方面带来的好处。而中文组别由港岛民生书院及喇沙书院竞逐，辩题亦是“香港应立法收紧访港人数”而两队也有出色的表现。

最后，拔萃女书院及港岛民生书院夺得英文组及中文组的冠军。我们十分荣幸邀请到曾继立首席法官，李庆年总裁判官，夏伟志资深大律师及许伟强大律师为英文组的评判，而雷健文主任裁判官，石永泰资深大律师，林定国资深大律师，麦梁成大律师及罗沛然大律师则为中文组的评判。

值得鼓舞的是参赛的队伍对今届的新赛规有十分正面的评价。我们在此恭喜胜出的队伍及所有参赛的同学。我们亦十分感谢所有评判及来自香港大学的义工同学。我们期待香港大律师公会辩论赛的未来十年将会带来更精彩刺激的比赛！

羅德謙大律师

Dragon Boat Championships 2014

It was one of those scorching days when most members of the Bar would have very much preferred to stay in the comfort of air conditioning at home or in chambers, but the heat did not deter a team of over 20 members of the Bar, pupils and students from heading all the way into Stanley Main Beach for the annual Stanley International Dragon Boat Championships on Tuen Ng Festival (2 June 2014).

We had been to the beach no less than five times for team practices already, and the weather had always been rather downcast. We even had the misfortune of having to paddle in the rain during one or two of our practices. On the day, however, the beach was almost unrecognisable to us. The beach was packed to the shoreline and the sun was beating down mercilessly on the crowd.
(continued) With barely enough time to drop off our belongings on our boat, we quickly made our way to the centre of the beach, where we waited for the dragon boats from the preceding race to pick us up. The tension and excitement in the air was palpable. Our opponents, who consisted of accountants, lawyers, bankers and people from all walks of life, shot us fleeting glances, trying to size up the competition. Soon we were all in our boats, paddling our way out to the starting line. No time was wasted as we took the opportunity to rehearse our starting strokes.

At the starting line, we waited for the signal for us to get ready. Sure enough, once all the boats were properly aligned, our drummer yelled “Paddles up!” and at the sound of the horn our paddles were churning furiously in and out of the water, in synchronisation with the rhythm of our drummer’s beats. The race was nothing like our practice sessions — it was over in a flash. We had been so focused on rowing that it took us a few seconds for us to realise that we had already passed the finishing line. Although we did not come first, we left a healthy number of competitors trailing behind us and we made it safely into the second round.

After a short rest back on our boat, we were soon back on the same dragon boat rowing out towards the starting line for the second round. We encountered a slight setback when someone alarmingly realised our boat was leaking water, but this was quickly solved by one of the organising staff when they realised one of the plugs of our boat had come off.

The competition was far fiercer during the second round and the results were far closer than the first round. Although we did not win it was still very satisfying to have beat other teams that day, especially when a number of us were pupils who had joined the dragon boat team for the very first time.

We spent the rest of the afternoon mingling on the boat with a good mix of music, champagne and games. We wrapped it up with a satisfying dinner in Wanchai. All in all, it was an enjoyable event and we all came out physically fitter than when we first met for practice sessions.

We also take this opportunity to give our heartfelt thanks to our learned friends Katy Chung and Kelvin Tang for all their time and effort spent on organising the practice sessions and the arrangements on the day, as well as to the Young Barristers Committee for their full support.

Newton Mak and Nicholas Oh