Letter from the Chairman

In the last edition of Buzz, I had written of my hope to find out more about the challenges that YBs and pupils face, and to explore whether there are ways that the YBC and the Bar Council can help. I am pleased that some YBs approached the YBC with concerns that they had about the new fiat system that was put into place in 2011. The YBC raised the issue with the Bar Council, and was able to meet with Mr. Kevin Zervos SC, Director of Public Prosecutions, members of the Bar Council and a number of senior members of the Bar in April 2011 to discuss the new fiat system. I hope that this kind of dialogue will continue.

Also noteworthy is that YBs have had an increasing number of opportunities to build relationships with other young professionals. A recent highlight was a seminar on arbitration which the YBC organised jointly with the Young Members Group of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and the Young Solicitors’ Group in October 2011. The seminar was entitled “Out with the old, in with the new: A new Ordinance and a new Interpretation”, and over 100 people attended. To start the evening, Mr. James Kwan, a partner at Baker & McKenzie, gave us a quick tour of the new Arbitration Ordinance (Cap. 609). Mr. Jonathan Wong of Parkside Chambers then addressed issues relating to the enforcement and setting aside of arbitral awards. Finally, Mr.

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Russell Coleman SC of Temple Chambers, ever entertaining, shared some thoughts on the important recent Congo case. This was the first time that the YBC has worked together with the Young Members Group and Young Solicitors’ Group to organise a joint seminar, and it was an excellent start.

In addition to continuing to visit the law schools in Hong Kong to give talks about pupillage applications and joining the Bar, the YBC has also teamed up with the Young Solicitors’ Group to meet with law students in more informal settings. Recently, members of the YBC and the Young Solicitors’ Group met with students from the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University to chat about career choices over drinks. Further, several YBs and young solicitors joined members of the HKU Law Association to do some volunteer work on 3 July 2011, spending the day with children of ethnic minorities on a trip to the HKPYG Organic Farm.

The YBC has also maintained regular YBC talks, and we were fortunate to have Deputy High Court Judge Au-Yeung give us practical advice in March 2011 about interlocutory hearings, CMCs, PTRs and trials. In August 2011, Stock VP kindly discussed with us “The Role of the Advocate”, and gave us tips on how the Court approaches cases and how we can improve our preparation for hearings.

In June 2011, the Bar’s dragon boating team took part in the Sun Life Stanley International Dragon Boat Championships like last year. Not only did YBs and pupils participate, we also invited law students to join in, again an opportunity for students to chat to us more about life at the Bar.

In addition, we have been stepping up our efforts in respect of other sports and social activities at the Bar. A number of YBs and pupils have enquired about what sports teams the Bar has, or whether there are any musical groups. In October 2011, the YBC and the Special Committee on Welfare organised a gathering for YBs and pupils to meet sports team captains and members, and to consider the possibility of starting up more teams and also forming musical groups. YBs and pupils can refer to Bar Circular No. 100/11 for details of the Bar’s sports teams that are already in place, namely the badminton team, football team, table-tennis team and basketball team.

Maintaining good tradition, the YBC hosted the HKBA Debating Competition 2010-2011 which culminated in the Finals on 26 March 2011. The Debating Competition 2011-2012 has started, and will be continuing through to the first quarter of 2012.

Finally, in line with the general trend in our society, YBs are increasingly moving beyond Hong Kong and broadening their horizons in doing so. A number of YBs joined the Bar’s delegation to Beijing in June 2011, and two YBC members attended the International Weekend 2011 in the UK.

That rounds up my brief report on YBC activities over the past year, but before I sign off, I would like to extend my warmest thanks to the Honourable Chief Justice Geoffrey Ma for taking the time to write a letter for Buzz. The Chief Justice has always taken a keen interest in junior members of the Bar, and we are grateful for his encouragement.

With this edition of Buzz, my term as Chairman of the YBC draws to a close. All that remains is for me to thank the members of the YBC, without whom Buzz and the various YBC activities I have mentioned above would not have been possible.

Queenie Lau

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November 2011

As I write this letter for Buzz, I am about to present the Bar Scholarships for this year. Next week, the Bar is giving me the great honour of a Bar Mess. My thoughts today are very much directed to the Bar. It is an institution from which I have derived immense enjoyment; for me, my years at the Bar have been among the happiest of my life and I am proud to have been a barrister. But that is not the theme for this letter.

For quite some time now, I have had uppermost in my mind the importance of propriety, etiquette and conduct among the legal profession. They are topics I have addressed in quite a number of talks in recent times. They are of course manifestations of the paramount duty owed to the court. It is perhaps easy to talk of slipping standards in conduct (and many senior members of the profession do). On my part, I do not believe that standards of conduct among barristers have dropped since the days I began practice, but at times I do feel a general reminder here would be appropriate.

The duty owed to the court is of course not a duty owed to any individual. When barristers bow to the judge and the judge bows to those before him, this is not just a common courtesy. Each is acknowledging the importance of the role of the courts, and that of the key participants in the administration of justice. These are roles which are essential in the public interest for the proper functioning of the law. It is all very well to talk about the importance of the Rule of Law. Indeed it is, but its proper functioning, in other words the administration of justice, is the ultimate litmus test for the success (or otherwise) of a legal system.

So why is the duty owed to the court so important? Our legal system is still very much an adversarial one in which much reliance is placed on legal practitioners to do their best to assist the court in arriving at a just resolution of the dispute before it. In a nutshell, this (doing the best to assist) comprises the duty owed to the court. It is a duty that is paramount and, where it conflicts, is a higher duty than that owed even to the client whom the barrister represents. This is the position, which is firmly established by case law, in all common law jurisdictions including Hong Kong. In our statutes, the duty owed to the court by solicitors is manifested in their being described as officers of the court (s.3(2) of the Legal Practitioners Ordinance, Cap.159). Barristers are not described as such in the LPO but it is clear they owe a paramount duty. Perhaps the clearest statement of this duty in statutory form is contained in Order 1A, r.3 of the Rules of the High Court (and District Court), wherein is prescribed the duty of the parties and their legal representatives in civil proceedings to assist the court in achieving the underlying objectives of the Rules.

This is not the occasion to enumerate the precise content of the duty owed to the court. You can look it up in the books. My message is simply a reminder of the overall importance of this duty: the public interest. So next time you perform the at times rather quaint rituals we often see in the courts, do realise there is a more profound, underlying reason for them than meets the eye. And if you can see that, you will have the answer to the most common question asked of lawyers, law students and judges: why have you chosen the law?

I wish you all much success in your endeavours.

The Honourable Chief Justice Geoffrey Ma
Session 1: Meeting with Mr. Du Chun of the Ministry of Justice PRC

On 9 June 2011, the Director of the Department of Guidance of the Work of Lawyers and Public Notaries of the Ministry of Justice PRC, Mr. Du Chun, met with representatives of the Bar Association.

Mr. Du praised the Hong Kong legal profession in its efforts in furthering the implementation of “One Country Two Systems”.

He further commented that the Mainland legal profession and judiciary have made enormous progress in the past few decades. There are now 2,000 law firms in the Mainland, and they are handling approximately two million cases each year. Non-contentious cases account for about half the caseload, and for the first time, the non-contentious work fees charged by law firms have exceeded the fees charged for contentious work.

New PRC laws have recently been enacted to allow lawyers to practise under three structures: (i) in partnerships; (ii) as individuals; and (iii) in less developed provinces, the Government will provide funding to practitioners for the establishment of law firms.

Lawyers have furthermore been granted special privilege under the law so that whatever defences they undertake for their clients would not be investigated by the authorities. This is akin to legal professional privilege in other jurisdictions and in line with protections afforded by the UN Convention.

Since 1990, Hong Kong law firms have started expanding their practices in China. Fifteen policy measures have been put in place to open up the Mainland market to Hong Kong legal professionals. There are now seventy-two Hong Kong legal representative offices in China.

However, two main restrictions still exist at the moment for Hong Kong lawyers wanting to practise in Mainland China: (i) the Hong Kong lawyer must have a representative office in China; and (ii) the Hong Kong lawyer can only have a contractual relationship with a Mainland lawyer, not a partnership. Moreover, a practitioner must be qualified as a Mainland lawyer in order to represent clients in court. Currently, a Hong Kong lawyer without such a qualification can only assume the role of a Citizen Representative when appearing for a client in court, and cannot charge any fees for doing so.

The Ministry of Justice will continue to investigate the possibility of implementing further measures to open up the Mainland market to Hong Kong lawyers.

The Bar Chairman, Mr. Kumar Ramanathan SC, thanked Mr. Du for the opportunity to meet and discuss the situation of the legal profession in Mainland China and the status of Hong Kong lawyers working in the Mainland. He commented that he was aware that there are many proceedings in Mainland China involving legal issues under Hong Kong law. It would thus be useful for the authorities in the Mainland, together with the courts, to explore the possibility of developing a system of amici curiae in the Mainland whereby Hong Kong lawyers could be appointed as amici curiae to assist the Court in cases involving Hong Kong law.
Session 2: Meeting at the Supreme People’s Court

On 9 June 2011, the delegation from the Bar had the opportunity to meet Mr. Shen De Yong (沈德坪), the Executive Vice President (常務副院長) and Grand Justice of the first rank (一級大法官) of the Supreme People’s Court (最高人民法院) (“SPC”), and his colleagues at the SPC.

Mr. Shen remarked on the rapid development of the judicial exchanges and cooperation between the Mainland and Hong Kong since the last visit of the Hong Kong Bar Association to Beijing in 2008. He recognised HKBA as an important legal organisation in Hong Kong and appreciated its contributions.

Mr. Shen then briefly introduced the judicial movement in China since 1979. He emphasised that the most important mission of the SPC is to exercise judicial power according to law so as to safeguard people’s rights and interests and to deliver social justice. Guided by the Central People’s Government, the SPC has initiated more than one hundred reforms to improve the entire judicial system since 1999. Moreover, there has been important cooperation between the Mainland and Macau under the framework of “One Country Two Systems”.

When discussing the prospect of further legal cooperation between the Mainland and Hong Kong, Mr. Shen stated there was no reason why the Mainland legal market should not be opened up, adding that it would not only be opened up to Hong Kong but also to the rest of the world. He believed that the expertise of the Bar would help promote the standard of Mainland lawyers. However, Mr. Shen also expressed his concern about possible instability arising from the opening up of the Mainland legal market due to inherent obstacles in the Mainland judicial system.

The Bar Chairman, Mr. Kumar Ramanathan SC, made clear the position of the HKBA that the Bar does not intend to compete with Mainland lawyers, but to complement their service, and to assist in improving the quality of legal services. With regard to solving identifiable obstacles, the Bar is willing to make use of its strengths to assist Mainland judicial organisations and lawyers; this would including offering proposals and suggestions, similar to what was done by the Bar in assisting the Hong Kong Judiciary during the implementation of the Civil Justice Reform.

Delegates further discussed with Mr. Shen the role Hong Kong barristers could play in the development of Qianhai as well as providing assistance to the courts, similar to the assistance provided by amici curiae in Hong Kong.

Grace Tso

Session 3: Luncheon meeting hosted by Mr. Qiao Xiaoyang

On 10 June 2011, Mr. Qiao Xiaoyang, Chairman of the HKSAR Basic Law Committee of the 11th NPC, generously hosted a luncheon meeting for the delegation from the Bar. Mr. Qiao and the delegates had the opportunity to discuss the basic principles and procedure of the interpretation of the Basic Law.

Mr. Qiao endorsed the Bar’s view as set out in the Bar Association’s press statement on 8 June 2011 about the Court of Final Appeal making a reference of provisions of the Basic Law to the NPCSC, and he agreed there is no question of the judicial autonomy of the courts of HKSAR being compromised or otherwise harmed when the Court of Final Appeal, acting in accordance with the Basic Law, which assigns and allocates powers as between the Central Authorities and the HKSAR, makes a reference of provisions of the Basic Law concerning affairs which are the responsibility of the Central People’s Government, and concerning the relationship between the Central Authorities and the HKSAR, to the NPCSC.

As to the procedure for interpretations of the Basic Law, Mr. Qiao stated that the NPCSC will consider the reports and opinions gathered in Hong Kong. The NPCSC will also consult its HKSAR Basic Law Committee before giving an interpretation. The voting on the draft decision will generally take place after the NPCSC’s first reading of the law. Mr. Qiao added that the Basic Law is not an ordinary piece of law requiring three readings. Therefore, the passing of the draft does not take as long as the passing of other pieces of law. The decision should then be printed and broadcasted to the public.

Mr. Qiao also suggested that the procedure for the interpretation of the Basic Law should be made more transparent.

Eunice Yung
Session 4: Meeting with Representatives from the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council

In the afternoon of 10 June 2011, the delegation of the HKBA met with representatives from the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council ("HKMAO") at Diaoyutai Hotel.

Mr. Zhang Xiaoming, Deputy Director of HKMAO, led a discussion about the recent decision of the CFA to make a reference of provisions of the Basic law to the NPCSC in Democratic Republic of the Congo and Others v FG Hemisphere Associates LLC [2011] 4 HKC 151.

The HKBA, in a press statement dated 8 June 2011, expressed its view that the CFA had acted in accordance with Article 158(3) of the Basic Law in making such a reference, and there was no question of the judicial autonomy of the courts of the HKSAR being compromised or otherwise harmed. The HKBA explained that the CFA is obligated to do so once it is satisfied that a final adjudication of a case before it necessitates the interpretation of provisions concerning affairs which are the responsibility of the Central People’s Government and concerning the relationship between the Central Authorities and the HKSAR.

Mr. Zhang said that he agreed with the views of the HKBA as stated in the press statement, and was happy to see that the HKBA adopted a stance which was in line with upholding the rule of law. He went on to address some of the main concerns and criticism relating to this decision of the CFA as voiced through the mass media of Hong Kong. He thanked the Chairman of the Bar for organising the visit to Beijing, which provided a platform to promote better understanding of the PRC and Hong Kong legal systems.

Ann Lui

A day out at Mutianyu, the Great Wall
Joint Seminar organised by YBC, YSG and YMG: “Out with the old, in with the new: A new Ordinance and a new Interpretation”

On 20 October 2011, the YBC jointly organised a seminar on the recent development of arbitration in Hong Kong with the Young Solicitors’ Group ("YSG") and the Young Members Group, CIArb, East Asia Branch ("YMG"). The talk was given by Mr. Russell Coleman SC of Temple Chambers, Mr. James Kwan of Messrs. Baker & McKenzie and Mr. Jonathan Wong of Parkside Chambers.

The evening began with the speakers and the members of YBC, YSG and YMG mingling and enjoying finger food and drinks. Mr. James Kwan kicked off the talk by introducing the features of the new Arbitration Ordinance (Cap. 609), in particular the "opt-in" provisions and the latest developments of arbitration in Hong Kong. This was followed by a detailed explanation of the various sections of the new Arbitration Ordinance by Mr. Jonathan Wong. Finally, Mr. Russell Coleman SC talked about the landmark judgment of the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal in Democratic Republic of the Congo and Others v FG Hemisphere Associates LLC [2011] 4 HKC 151 and the implications of the case for arbitration in Hong Kong.

The talk was very informative and the feedback was extremely positive. Indeed, the great response was demonstrated by the numerous questions and comments enthusiastically put forward by audience members. Many expressed immense interest in attending future talks and events co-organised by YBC, YSG and YMG.

Annie Leung

The HKBA Debating Competition 2010-2011

The Hong Kong Bar Association organises the Debating Competition each year with the aim of raising the awareness of socio-legal issues and the rule of law among secondary school students. Running in its 7th consecutive year, the HKBA’s Debating Competition 2010-2011 continued to attract remarkable publicity and attention in Hong Kong.

As in previous years, the 2010-2011 Competition was oversubscribed, and lots had to be drawn to determine which sixteen schools would be eligible to participate in each division (English / Chinese) of the Competition. Debate motions in each round covered an extensive range of socio-legal issues. For the preliminary rounds which were held on 6 and 20 November 2010 respectively, motions included: “Same-sex marriage should be legalised in Hong Kong”, “The review procedure under section 104 of the Magistrates Ordinance (Cap. 227) should be abolished in Hong Kong”, “應在香港設立紅燈區” and “現時保障個人私隱的法律已經足夠”. For the quarter-finals, the motions were: “All Hong Kong permanent residents who have reached age 18 or above should be required to vote in elections”, “Health insurance should be made compulsory in Hong Kong”, “應在香港訂立競爭法”, and “應可由電視直播刑事審訊”. “Celebrities convicted of criminal offences should be sentenced more heavily/被定罪的名人應被判處較重的刑罰” and “Parental responsibility in the event of divorce should always be joint/父母離婚後應共同承擔對子女的責任” were the motions for the semi-finals.
After a 5-month period of intensive rounds, the Grand Finals were successfully held on 26 March 2011 at the University of Hong Kong. The audience, adjudicators, and students were moved by the excellent performance of some of the best young debaters in Hong Kong. After a highly charged debate and intellectually stimulating exchanges between the debaters and students speaking from the floor, Diocesan Girls’ School and German Swiss International School were adjudged winners of the Competition in the Chinese and English Divisions respectively. In both divisions, the runners-up lost by only a small margin, and the adjudicators were very impressed by the high standard of all the finalists.

On behalf of the YBC and the HKBA, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all the participating adjudicators from the Bar, members of the Judiciary and student helpers for their valuable time, constructive comments and unwavering support in making this event a success!

**ENGLISH DIVISION FINALS**

**MOTION:** Proprietors of Internet forums should bear legal liability for defamatory content published by forum users.

**TEAMS:**
- German Swiss International School (Affirmative)
- v
- Queen’s College (Opposition)

**ADJUDICATORS:**
- The Hon. Mr. Justice Au
  - Judge of the Court of First Instance of the High Court
- Mr. Rimsky Yuen SC
  - Former Chairman of the Hong Kong Bar Association
- Mr. Paul Shieh SC
  - Vice-Chairman of the Hong Kong Bar Association
YBC Talk: CMC, PTR and interlocutory proceedings
Deputy High Court Judge Au-Yeung

“How should I prepare for a hearing before a Master?”
“Should I prepare a skeleton for a 3-mins hearing?”
“What should I be aware of when appearing before a Master at a CMC hearing or a PTR?”
“What preparation work do I need to do for a Summary Assessment of Costs?”

Many YBs instructed to appear before Masters may have similar questions to these. Fortunately, on 29 March 2011, Deputy High Court Judge Au-Yeung was kind enough to take the time to provide useful information about how to prepare for CMCs, PTRs and interlocutory proceedings. The talk was a helpful sharing of experience of the practical issues frequently faced by practitioners when attending such hearings.

DHJC Au-Yeung shared her views on practical issues when preparing for a short hearing. In particular, she stated that many practitioners make common mistakes in preparing for summonses. One example is that many practitioners, when making an application to set aside a default judgment, forget to state the precise ground of the application. DHJC Au-Yeung made a simple suggestion for avoiding common mistakes: check the White Book!

As to preparing for Summary Assessments of Costs, DHJC Au-Yeung stated that there is no hard-and-fast rule; however, practitioners should familiarise themselves with how to read a skeleton bill.

DHJC Au-Yeung also encouraged YBs to learn from more senior barristers by asking questions. YBs were further reminded that as many solicitors have more experience in handling CMCs, PTRs and costs assessments, we should also try to learn from them.

Johnny Fok

The new flat system: an open discussion
with the Bar Council and Mr. Kevin Zervos SC

Many YBs and pupils had concerns about the revamping of the flat system earlier this year. The new scheme includes the implementation of a one-day training course, followed by a two-week assignment of paid flat work and assessment for those wishing to be included in the Magistrate’s Court “B” List of flat work. YBs and pupils had one main worry: would the two-week assignment for those wishing to join the “B” List adversely affect the amount of flat work and income available to YBs already on the “B” List?

The YBC voiced such concerns with the Bar Council, and on 15 April 2011, YBs and pupils had the chance to hear from and talk directly with the Bar Council and Mr. Kevin Zervos SC, Director of Public Prosecutions. Mr. Zervos emphasised that the purpose of the new flat system is to provide training to those who desire to take flat work, and to ensure that flat work is conducted at a good standard.

Mr. Zervos made clear that the Department of Justice intends to brief out more. Whilst Mr. Zervos hoped that there would be more, rather than less, flat work for YBs, a practical difficulty is that the number of cases in the magistracies seems to have been decreasing. The drop in the number of cases has been reflected in, for example, the closure of two courts in the magistracies. This was a major factor that affects the amount of flat work available for YBs.

On a separate matter, Mr. Zervos also sought the views of YBs and pupils on “experience briefs”. He told us of an example where a senior junior instructed by the Department of Justice had asked if a brief could also be given to a junior member of his Chambers on a complimentary basis. Mr. Zervos welcomed this idea of “experience briefs” where junior barristers are paid a token daily rate, and sought our views. The main purpose of this scheme is to provide a learning opportunity for junior barristers.

The general sentiment from YBs who expressed their views on the matter was that experience briefs would be welcome provided that this did not lead to a reduction of occasions where junior counsel would be briefed for flat work on a normal, remunerated basis. This was reflected to Mr. Zervos.

As a result, in October 2011, the Department of Justice announced a scheme whereby junior barristers with under 10 years’ experience may be engaged to act as understudy to senior junior counsel. Details are contained in Bar Circular No. 112/11.

The YBC is grateful to Mr. Zervos for generously giving up his time to chat to YBs and pupils in April 2011 and for following up with the understudy scheme. We would also like to extend our thanks to the Bar Chairman, Mr. Kumar Ramanathan SC, the members of the Bar Council and other senior members of the Bar who came to the discussion and helped bring about the new understudy scheme.

Queenie Lau
Following our annual tradition, the YBC Dragon Boating Team, “Dragon’s Advocates 2011”, joined the Dragon Boat Race held at Stanley Main Beach on Tuen Ng Festival this year.

YBs and participants from the University of Hong Kong trained hard and gave everything they had during the weekly training sessions. Each practice was followed by a well-earned bottle of cold beer at a Stanley pub, where comrades replenished their energy and took the time to mingle. Students from HKU who were keen on learning more about the profession and life as a barrister were grateful for the opportunity to talk to their YB teammates about their work experiences.

One special feature of the race this year was the post-race Drinking Boat Race 2011 held for the very first time, at which YBs and Government Counsel from the DOJ opened their mouths and bellies to a drinking competition. Participants from both sides enjoyed the contest very much. In the end, YBs were victorious and walked away as champions!

The YBC hopes to continue to participate in the Dragon Boating Race next year, and all interested YBs (and friends of YBs) and pupils are invited to join in the fun!

Adrian Wong
On 8 April 2011, the YBC teamed up with the Young Solicitors’ Group to come together for drinks with members of the Law Association of the University of Hong Kong. Subsequently, the Undergraduate Law Society and the Graduate Law Students Association, both of the Chinese University, joined in, and another event was held on 30 September 2011.

The purpose of such events is to enable law students to have an opportunity to meet and speak to legal practitioners in a casual environment about career choices and related issues. At the same time, the YBC aims to promote the Bar via these informal channels and to attract talent. Such events further enable the YBC to strengthen its relationship with university organisations. Indeed, student volunteers provide much-needed assistance during the Hong Kong Bar Association Debating Competition, usually held at the University of Hong Kong. Moreover, university students are invited and recruited to join the Dragon Boat Racing team of the Bar.

The drinks events held in 2011 were all very well-attended by students. It is expected that similar events will be held regularly every 2-3 months.

Vincent Lung

YBC talk: “The Role of the Advocate”
The Hon. Stock VP

On 29 August 2011, the Hon. Stock VP spoke to YBs on the topic of “Role of the Advocate” and shared his views on the key attributes of a good advocate.

Stock VP began by stressing that a barrister is constantly evaluated by his professional reputation. Integrity is as important as advocacy skills and legal knowledge. YBs should always remind themselves that they owe duties to both their clients and to the court.

Stock VP also explained that good advocacy can only be achieved through thorough case preparation. This calls for persistent hard work and detailed understanding of the case. A common problem amongst YBs is failure to spot good supporting arguments. Stock VP attributed this problem to insufficient case preparation or lack of clarity regarding the issues in dispute. Stock VP further advised YBs to anticipate questions from the Bench in the course of their case preparation.

Stock VP then shared several practical tips on court etiquette and case presentation. YBs were reminded to be courteous when addressing the court and succinct in their arguments and use of authorities.

Eunice Yung
Symphony of Love: A joint community service project with Caritas, YSG and HKU Law Association

On 3 July 2011, the Caritas Hong Kong Links of Harmony, YBC, YSG and the HKU Law Association organised a joint community service project, "Symphony of Love". Over 20 volunteers from these organisations spent a memorable day reaching out to ethnic minority children with the aim of promoting racial harmony amongst people of different backgrounds, and to assist the children in understanding and engaging in Hong Kong society.

The event started with exciting ice-breaking games. The children and volunteers then enjoyed lunch together at the Caritas Kowloon Centre. The fun activities continued at the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (HKYFG) Organic Farm, where participants were taken on an interesting tour. During the tour, both volunteers and children learnt about organic farming and participated in hands-on farming activities, and even learned to make paper from scratch.

Despite the hot weather, all the participants enjoyed their day. The children loved playing games with the volunteers, and the volunteers had an opportunity to learn about the children's home life, values and experiences as ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. Indeed, the children were able to teach the volunteers a few things about farming themselves: during the ploughing of the field, most volunteers were complete amateurs with the plough, whereas some of the children appeared to be experts – it transpired that many of the children still go back to their original home in Southern Asia every now and then, where they would help their families farm and collect crops. Through such activities as well as conversation and games, cultural and background differences were soon forgotten.

The event was a truly heart-warming experience; it was also rewarding to know that as volunteers, we had contributed in a small way to help promote harmony in Hong Kong amongst people from different ethnic backgrounds. The YBC, YSG and the HKU Law Association envisage that similar events will be organised in the future, and participation from YBs will be most welcome.

Adrian Wong

Special Committee on Welfare, YBC Sports Teams and Musical Groups Drinks Gathering

In the past few months, the YBC has received a number of enquiries from YBs and pupils about joining the various sports teams of the HKBA. Currently, the HKBA has four sports teams, namely basketball, football, badminton and table-tennis. Not only do the teams regularly hold practices, they also participate in joint tournaments with the sports teams of other professional bodies in Hong Kong.

In view of YBs’ interest, the Special Committee on Welfare and the YBC organised a welcome drinks event on 14 October 2011 for YBs and pupils to learn more about the HKBA sports teams. At the event, the possibility of forming musical groups within the Bar was also explored.

The event was met with enthusiasm, and on the night of the gathering, more than 30 participants showed up at the Habitat Lounge, where the drinks were held. Team Captains and members of sports teams were eager to share their experiences and to welcome new members to join their teams. It was a casual and friendly occasion for everyone to get to know each other and to obtain information about upcoming practice dates and tournaments. A number of sports teams were able to recruit new members. There were also participants who indicated their wish to put together a rock band and a classical music choir within the Bar. The gathering was a great success, with everyone enjoying the fun and energetic vibe and lively company.

The YBC will keep members posted about the progress of the formation of musical groups as well as forthcoming musical performances and sports competitions.

Lastly, the YBC would like to thank the Bar Council and sports team captains for their generous sponsorship of this event.

Deanna Law
This year’s International Weekend took place in London between 29 September 2011 and 1 October 2011. It was hosted by the Junior Lawyers Division of the Law Society of England and Wales, and was held in association with the Young Barristers’ Committee of the Bar Council of England and Wales, the European Young Bar Association and the London Young Lawyers Group. There were around 45 delegates coming from Asia, Africa, Europe, Central and North America.

The official programme opened with a keynote speech by Mr. Wm. T. (Bill) Robinson III, President of the American Bar Association (ABA). Mr. Robinson reminded us of our role as officers of the court, and our enhanced capacity, with the advantage of our legal education, to make a positive difference in society by, for instance, providing pro bono legal services to those in need.

Highlights of this year’s programme also included talks on highly topical subjects such as alternative business structures (which allow non-lawyers to own and invest in English law firms) by Mr. Nicholas Green QC, the immediate past Chairman of the Bar Council of England and Wales; the Bribery Act 2010, which came into force on 1 July 2011, by Mr. David Aaronberg QC; and a panel debate on social media and super-injunctions.

Also included in our schedule was the opportunity to visit landmark legal sites such as the Temple Church, the Old Bailey, the Royal Courts of Justice and some of the Inns of Court. In particular, we were given the rare chance of visiting some Barristers’ Chambers to see what life at the Bar in London is like and to interact with barristers, pupils and clerks at the English Bar.

Of particular note is that a number of speakers mentioned the growing demand for legal services in the Mainland and the opportunity it offers to young lawyers to expand their businesses. As we noted in the last issue of Buzz, Hong Kong barristers occupy a unique position to take on advisory work on contentious and non-contentious matters with a Mainland component. This is more so for barristers who can effectively apply their legal knowledge and skills in both English and Chinese (including Putonghua). YBs will certainly benefit if this new business opportunity can be properly exploited.

Kay Szeto  Emma Tsang

Worth a laugh (maybe not)

Counsel: “Give me my full brief and refreshers, you swine!”

Wife: “Give me your full brief and refreshers, you swine!”

Tony Ko  Laisan Cheng
YBC Christmas Drinks 2011

Guests enjoyed scrumptious snacks. The Christmas Drinks this year was held at one of the best whisky bars in town - Angel's Share.

Deputy Hon. Secretary, Mr. Frederick Chan, and Queenie Lau, Chairman of the YBC and YBs.

The YBC would like to extend our warmest thanks to the Chief Justice and the Chairman of the Bar for their continuous support of our events.

The Hon. Mr. Justice Tang VP posing with Selina Kung and Keith Lam.

The Chief Justice catching up with Queenie Lau and other YBs.
The YBC received a generous donation of 11 bottles of wines from the Bar Council for the highlight of the night – a lucky draw!

From left: Queenie Lau, the Hon. Mr. Justice Au, Lisa Wong SC, the Hon. Mr Justice Barma, Robin Egerton and Elaine Liu.

Congratulations to the members who won bottles of wine from our lucky draw!

From left: Hugh Kam, Deanna Law, Toby Cheng and Shirley Hung.

Photographs taken by Deanna Law and Selina Kung

Young Barristers’ Committee (2011-2012)
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Vice-Chairman
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Deanna Law
Adrian Wong
Hugh Kam

BUZZ is committed to bringing you articles of interest both to YBs and pupils. We welcome articles from YBs and pupils. Should you have any events, stories, photos, comments or questions for BUZZ or the YBC, please send them to May Chung or Queenie Lau (contact details in the Bar List) or email us at: ybc@hkba.org