


hand on the day, especially David Wheeler and Tina Dunn who had to travel down to London from the provinces.

Last, but by no means least, thanks to Mary P'Anson and her team at Central Office. They make the seemingly impossible look easy and always manage to meet the tightest of deadlines with cool aplomb.

I am sure the Americans would like to reciprocate our hospitality if we give them the opportunity. What are the chances of holding a future SFLA National Conference in, say, New York or California?

Item on the next National Committee meeting agenda please Rosemary...



**THE PRESIDENT OF THE FAMILY DIVISION**  
*The Right Honourable Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss DBE  
 and her International Committee*

*Request the pleasure of the company of*

.....

*in the President's Court at the Royal Courts of Justice  
 Strand, London WC2*



*on Tuesday 18 July 2000 at 4.15 pm*

- to hear -

*a Welcome Address*

*to Family Law Members of the  
 American Bar Association*

- to be followed by -

*a Reception*      **Solicitors Family  
 Law Association**

*Hosted by the  
 Family Law Bar Association  
 and the  
 Solicitors Family Law Association*

*Dress:*                      *Admission only  
 Business Suit*              *with this invitation*

*Please enter RCJ by West Green Entrance, Strand*



*Richard Podell, ABA; Justice Rodney K Buss, Family Court of Australia; The Rt Hon Lord Justice Thorpe; The President; The Rt Hon Mr Justice Johnson; Sandra Morgan Little, Chair, ABA Family Law Section, Jonathan Hirst QC, Chairman, General Council of the Bar*



*Lady Justice Hale, an ABA Delegate, David Hodson*



*Susan Coats, San Francisco; Daniel Jaffe, Beverly Hills; Estelle Chun, Los Angeles; David Truex; David Fink, San Francisco; Marcus Dearle.*



# Royal Courts welcome for visiting Americans

David Truex, Chair, International Committee

There must have been over 200 of us packed into the Presidents Court at the Royal Courts of Justice on 18 July for the reception in honour of American family lawyers visiting London for the American Bar Association Conference. The President, resplendent in wig and robes, surrounded by a similarly attired entourage of representatives from the Family Division and the Court of Appeal, enjoyed regaling our American cousins with a brief history of the development of modern family law from ecclesiastical beginnings. The visitors were impressed by what they saw, ABA Family Law Section Chair Sandra Morgan Little commenting that they do not have family courts like ours where she comes from.

At the conclusion of the President's address there were brief responses from Elizabeth Lawson QC, on behalf of the FLBA, and Richard Sax on behalf of the SFLA. Richard spoke of the American and British legal cultures being separated by a common language and illustrated his theme with American examples of what English lawyers would no doubt consider old-fashioned American terminology (on returning to the office, I could not resist looking up *egregious* in my Shorter Oxford). Richard Podell, a former chair of the ABA Family Law Section, commended Lord Justice Thorpe for his role in conceiving the gathering more than a year previously before deferring to his current leader, Ms Little, who then thanked the English hosts for their

hospitality in what was clearly a genuine and heartfelt response.

With the formal proceedings completed, the President adjourned her court and invited all guests to partake of refreshments at a reception in the lobby.

My recollection of this second stage of the event is somewhat hazy. I recall a general hubbub of family lawyers from both sides of the pond enthusiastically swapping anecdotes and ideas from their respective jurisdictions. I think I found out a little about Wisconsin law from Ray Krek and Washington law from Philip De Turk, and I certainly remember some interesting points about California law gleaned from a bevy of Sunshine-Staters, including my old friend David Fink of San Francisco. But what I remember most is the spectacular standard of the catering. The Yellowglen bubbly flowed freely and a veritable cornucopia of superb canapés tumbled continuously from the kitchen on trays being circulated by an army of attentive waiters. The caterers, Rayney and Taylor, (recommended by Marion Howell and DJ Isobel Plumstead) deserve our thanks and congratulations. They even arranged for the musty old lobby to be decorated with exotic blooms.

We had been warned that many of the dignitaries had to leave the event early for an important assignment at Downing Street but I fear that very few managed to tear themselves away in time. In fact, the party was still going long after

the scheduled closing time of 7.30 pm.

The reception was sponsored jointly by the FLBA and the SFLA and, like the jointly sponsored Human Rights Act seminar the previous month, was a great success. On the basis of this evidence there should be more joint ventures between our two organisations.

Many are owed thanks and congratulations for making the event such a success. The President oversaw the planning to ensure that we got the details right. Lord Justice Thorpe put in many long hours over more than a year since the idea of a reception for family lawyers to coincide with the ABA Conference was first proposed. The staff of the Court Service, particularly Director Ian Hyams with assistance from Doug Noon and Jane Follett, was invaluable. Ruth Few, Clerk of the Rules, showed us how to find our way around the nooks and crannies of normally forbidden areas within the Royal Courts of Justice. Special thanks are due to Pamela Scriven QC and Rosemary Carter for supporting sponsorship by their respective organisations, without which the unique opportunity to share experiences with our American colleagues would have been lost.

Thanks also to the other two members of our hard working organising committee, Anthony Kirk of the FLBA and David Hodson and to those international committee members who lent a





SFLA

Solicitors Family  
Law Association

Issue 85 August 2000

# review



**SFLA/FLBA**

**Human Rights Conference**

*Legal representation of children under CAFCASS*

*American Bar Association Conference*