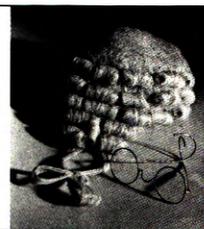


Lifestyle of the Baby Barrister



by **St. John Hibble, Barrister-at-Law**

So there you are, after all the speeches, all the dinners and all the photographs. Fully signed up, fully insured and fully indebted baby barristers. "Baby barrister" is probably a misleading term - peon is probably more accurate. You are on the lowest rung in the hierarchy, destined to be sent off to faraway courts to see if you can make your name and return to fickle fame in William Street. You will recognise judges, silks and juniors who are blissfully unaware of who you are. If it were not for your fellow readers and a friendly face in the coffee shop, you might think yourself invisible.

There are two things that a baby barrister must be good at: drinking coffee and paying bills. Ultimately, paying bills takes precedence over drinking coffee, and you'll probably have to give up drinking coffee, as it will become too expensive. On the brighter side, one of the many positives about coming to the Bar is that you can arrive at your chambers whenever you

want. You can also leave whenever you want. This freedom is greatly facilitated by the fact that you often have nothing to do.

Of course there are other things that a baby barrister must master. One could say that 'the Law' is one such thing. However, it is quickly apparent once you've signed the Bar Roll that in fact you know nothing about the Law and that you have just embarked on a career where your ignorance will be on public display. Therefore, you must master the art of appearing to completely understand issues that leave most people bleeding from the eyes from utter confusion.

Becoming a barrister also signals the commencement of The Great Relationship Of Your Life. This relationship is, of course, that between a barrister and their mobile phone. You'll love it, you'll hate it, you'll obsess over it and you'll neglect it. Some barristers get caught out using other people's phones, and it's not

unknown for some barristers to trade-in their old phones for newer models. In short, every major characteristic of intimate human relationships is re-enacted between barristers and their mobiles.

Perhaps the strangest thing is actually referring to yourself as a 'barrister'. Sometimes it feels analogous to a five-year-old child referring to him or herself as an astronaut. It just doesn't feel right to call yourself a barrister when other members of the profession can cite cases, court rules and esoteric legal principles, with the same ease as most people recite their name and address.

But no worthwhile endeavour is achieved without cost and commitment. If you persevere through the obstacles and self-doubt, then you will realise that you have made the right choice at that moment when you rise to your feet and say: "Your Honour, I appear on behalf of..." ■

Update on the Basics:

The Young Lawyers' Reference Collection 2003

Review by **Lucy Davis, Corrs Chambers Westgarth**

The *Reference Collection* is an essential resource for junior legal practitioners - complementing recent law graduates' academic training with its focus on practical issues and application of the law in a variety of important legal areas, while also providing an update of recent legal issues.

The *Reference Collection* is a collation of all papers presented by legal practitioners with expertise in their particular field at the Young Lawyers' Lecture Series run by the Law Institute of Victoria. It covers a wide range of topics in commercial, property, litigation, family and criminal law, as well as dealing with ethical dilemmas in legal practice. For those who missed out on attending the lecture series, the *Reference Collection* provides a comprehensive overview of a range of legal issues. For those who were able to attend the series, the *Reference Collection* will provide a useful resource and easy reminder of the knowledge obtained.

All papers in the *Reference Collection* are an up-to-date overview of the law, with a focus on the practical application of legal principles. A number of papers provide "user guides" to particular legal transactions. For example, there are papers dealing with key issues in sale of land transactions (acting for both the vendor and the purchaser) and useful overviews of practice and procedure in a number of jurisdictions (from VCAT to the Supreme Court). In addition, there are papers providing guidance for common family law applications and tips for young players in dealing with the legal side of the acquisition or sale of a business.

For those with a more academic interest, some of the papers focus on topical or new areas of law and provide a detailed overview of the particular area. For example, there are comprehensive papers on current issues in technology law, copyright law and business tax reforms.

The papers are easily digestible and can be read for an introduction to particular areas of

law, as well as for a guide to legal practice. The *Reference Collection* is a handy addition to the junior practitioner's desk. ■

