



Land Registry International Unit

End of Year Report

April 2007 – March 2008



Contents

Foreword	3
Review of activities	4
Administrative tasks	4
Educational activities	4
Incoming study visits	4
International conferences	7
Other educational activity	8
International collaboration and representation	8
Projects and associated work	10
General comments	11
2008/9 Objectives.....	12



Report on the work of Land Registry's International Unit

April 2007 – March 2008

Foreword

This has been another exciting year for the International Unit.

Over the year, we have continued to receive large numbers of visitors from overseas and to enjoy the benefits that such contacts provide. These have included government ministers and our counterparts in other jurisdictions as well as officials and others who simply want to learn about the way we do things. We have also continued to play an active part in relevant international forums, including the UN Economic Commission for Europe's Working Party on Land Administration (UN-ECE WPLA), the European Land Information Service (EULIS) and the European Land Registry Association (ELRA). When appropriate, we have taken opportunities to speak or to provide speakers at overseas conferences. We have also been able to take advantage of new opportunities to expand our international project portfolio, and have sought to increase the range of organisations with which we collaborate internationally.

In presenting this report, I must pay tribute to the many Land Registry colleagues who have variously contributed to our programmes for overseas visitors, participated in international project work and represented Land Registry in the various international forums in which we have an important role to play. Special thanks go to John Manthorpe CB, former Chief Executive and Chief Land Registrar, whose knowledge, encouragement and wise counsel I will greatly miss following his retirement in March 2008 from the position of Advisor to the International Unit.

In the forthcoming year we will continue to build on this work. Where possible, we will seek out new opportunities to engage with our overseas counterparts. We will continue to share our expertise where it is needed and to exploit the development opportunities that such contacts provide for our staff and our organisation.

Jon Atkey
Head of International Unit
April 2008



Review of activities

Administrative tasks

Our objectives were to:

- continue to act as a focal point for all overseas enquiries and as an organisational centre for all incoming and outgoing international activities
- continue to act as a central knowledge and information centre, holding literature, legislation and documentation relating to overseas registries and registration systems
- provide an annual report on the activities of the unit.

The Unit consolidated its role as the focal point for Land Registry's overseas enquiries and activities. Details of the many activities organised by the Unit are set out in this report.

The Unit continued to receive and hold a wide variety of reports, published articles, specialist journals, conference papers and other literature relating to international land administration.

Educational activities

Our objective was to continue to build and maintain working relationships and contacts with overseas registries and other organisations active in the sphere of land administration. Our primary activities in this area were:

- incoming study visits
- conference participation

Incoming study visits

There has been a steady flow of visits arranged and delivered for visitors from overseas during the year. The study visits provide good opportunities to exchange experience and expertise and to build relationships with our counterparts in other countries and organisations. We aim to make such visits as helpful and informative as possible by establishing in advance what our visitors' specific objectives are, and preparing a programme of presentations, discussions and practical exercises tailored accordingly.

As ever, these events have benefited greatly from the willingness of colleagues in local offices and within Head Office to help with their organisation and presentation. We are grateful also to Ordnance Survey, Registers of Scotland and Valuation Office Agency, with whom we have co-operated successfully on a number of visits during the year.

Our programme of study visits in 2007/8 brought us into contact with one or more delegations from fourteen different countries:



Australia

Registrars and senior officials from three different States of Australia visited us in September. Topics focused on during the two-day programme included development of electronic services and e-conveyancing, corporate governance and dealing with fraud. A day at Croydon Office formed part of the itinerary.

Bermuda

In September we welcomed three officers from the Land Title Registry Office Bermuda to Tunbridge Wells Office, to gain an insight into land registration in England and Wales. The visitors are external students studying for the Certificate in land registration law and practice; the visit was combined with their induction event held in London.

The same three officers visited us again in January. One spent a day at Head Office learning about marketing and communication. The other two visited Information Systems and spent their time learning about our geographic information strategy, and survey and mapping standards.

Egypt

Croydon Office was host to a delegation of 13 people from Egypt for a three-day study visit in March. The group comprised senior officials from the Ministry of Justice, the Real Estate Publicity Department and the Egyptian Survey Authority. The visit was funded by the United States Agency for International Development, and included a comprehensive insight into the past, present and future of land registration in England and Wales.

Hong Kong

In July we welcomed three land registration officers from Hong Kong Land Registry for a five-day study visit. The programme included presentations on legislation, training, customer service, electronic services and e-conveyancing, as well as demonstrations of live processing of applications which were carried out by people at Croydon Office.

Japan

In February, a meeting was arranged for the First Secretary of the Embassy of Japan and three academics, representing the Ministry for Land, Infrastructure and Transport in Japan, to learn about the House Price Index compiled by Land Registry.

Latvia

A PhD student from the University of Latvia visited us in November to find out about our survey and mapping services.

New Zealand

A visit from the Chief Executive of Land Information New Zealand in December provided an ideal opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas relating to e-registration and e-conveyancing.



Nigeria

Throughout the year we have again hosted various visitors from Nigeria as part of our on-going project work in that country. In June we met with the Director of Lands and the Permanent Secretary from Osun State, and in August we welcomed a delegation of senior officials from the Ministry of Lands Housing and Survey, Ogun State. In December we hosted two short visits for the recently elected Honourable Commissioner of Bayelsa State. All of these visits were carried out in conjunction with Infoterra Limited.

Norway

We received a delegation of journalists from Norway for a brief visit in September. They wanted to learn about Land Registry information services.

Russian Federation

In October we worked with Registers of Scotland to provide a five-day study tour for a delegation of eight people from the Russian Federation. The focus of the tour was human resources and development of Land Registry people. The visit, which was the result of a successful bid for the contract, included a day at Croydon Office.

Singapore

The Chief Executive of Singapore Land Authority visited us in July with two of his colleagues. The purpose of his visit was to discuss organisational and corporate challenges and to find out about our strategic initiatives, including e-conveyancing.

In September, a further visit was hosted for an officer from Singapore Land Authority, this time to learn about our survey and mapping services.

South Korea

A delegation of officials from the Supreme Court of the Republic of Korea visited us in February. They were interested to learn about e-conveyancing, e-lodgement, public access to the register, and also the governance and organisation of Land Registry.

Spain

In November we hosted a visit for three Spanish registrars who are developing a 'White Book' on comparative law relating to different registration systems in Europe. The purpose of the visit was to learn about the law and practice of land registration in England and Wales.

Sri Lanka

Prevention of fraud was the main interest for a lawyer from Sri Lanka, who visited us in March.

Other activities

In addition to the visits outlined above, we have arranged meetings at Head Office for senior officials from Registers of Scotland, Habitat for Humanity, Infoterra, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) – Major Disaster Management Commission, UK Hydrographic Office, MDA Information Systems and Emerging Market Economic Limited, to discuss ways in which our organisations might be able to work together.



International conferences

During the past twelve months we have participated in the following conferences:

April 2007 – Spain

Chris Pitt-Lewis attended an international workshop in Murcia, which was organised by the Colegio de Registradores de España. The focus for the workshop was 'The property registration system as an instrument of judicial co-operation among European Union countries for the application of judicial decisions in the realm of the family and of succession and wills'.

May 2007 – Germany

Our Chief Land Registrar and Chief Executive, Peter Collis CB HonRICS CCMI, and Deputy Chief Executive, Ted Beardsall CBE both attended a conference in Munich arranged by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – Working Party on Land Administration (UNECE WPLA). The theme for the conference was 'Effective and sustainable land management'. Peter Collis delivered a presentation at the conference entitled 'Unlocking the potential of the land register for the good of society'.

May 2007 - Bulgaria

Head of the Unit, Jon Atkey, represented Land Registry at a Eurogeographics for Cadastre and Land Registry workshop held in Sofia. The general topic for the workshop was 'Quality and efficiency improvements in Cadastres and Land Registries'. Jon delivered a presentation about our experiences relating to e-conveyancing.

May 2007 – Netherlands

Liz Hirst (former Director of e-conveyancing) and Julie Barry (Head of Stakeholder Engagement) attended the 'International Conference of World Leading Countries on Electronic Conveyance'. The conference, held in Amsterdam, was organised by Dutch Kadaster. Liz gave a demonstration of electronic signatures at the event and Julie gave an overview of progress made with e-conveyancing in England and Wales.

July 2007 – England

We assisted Ordnance Survey with the organisation of one of the workshops at the international 'Cambridge Conference' for heads of mapping organisations worldwide. Andrew Trigg, Chief Geographic Information Officer, chaired the workshop 'Land Administration for the 21st Century', which included speakers from Nigeria, Portugal, USA and the World Bank (Asia Sector). Yvette Ragozins, from Nottingham East Office, provided assistance as a rapporteur for the week. Sue Knowles, co-ordinator for the Unit, also represented Land Registry at the event.



September 2007 – Ireland

Dublin castle was the venue for the UNECE WPLA 'Registering the World' conference, which was hosted by the Property Registration Authority of Ireland. John Manthorpe, advisor to the International Unit and former Chief Land Registrar, provided the keynote address. Ted Beardsall chaired the sessions for the third day, 'International developments on electronic registration and electronic conveyancing'. Other representatives from Land Registry attending the conference were Peter Collis, Joe Timothy (Director of Legal Services), John Wright (Director of Information Services), Steve Kelway (General Counsel – E-conveyancing) and Jon Atkey.

October 2007 – Spain

Chris Pitt-Lewis attended a seminar in Madrid, organised by the Colegio de Registradores de España. The topic for the seminar was 'Judicial decisions on litigation stemming from inheritance'.

November 2007 – Cyprus

Ted Beardsall and Andrew Trigg represented Land Registry at the Eurogeographics for Cadastre and Land Registry workshop in Nicosia, the central theme for which was 'Data-access; relevance and impact on Cadastres and Land Registries'. Andrew delivered a presentation at the event entitled 'Open access to land information: dream or reality'.

Other educational activity

RICS qualification scheme

In February, John Manthorpe provided input to a workshop for Ordnance Survey participants of the RICS qualification. He delivered a session on Cadastre and Land Management.

Future Leaders Development Programme

In October and November, Sue Knowles attended the induction events for the Local Accelerated Module and Central Accelerated Module participants. She delivered presentations about the work of the Unit and highlighted possible international development opportunities.

International collaboration and representation

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – Working Party on Land Administration (UNECE WPLA)

Ted Beardsall – as the senior officer responsible for International activities – has continued to represent Land Registry on the Bureau of the UNECE WPLA, attending meetings in Germany, Ireland and Switzerland. Along with others', Ted's period of office as an elected member of the WPLA Bureau came to an end in November 2007. Ted had served as a Bureau member



for over 8 years. Jon Atkey was subsequently elected to one of the vacated Bureau seats. The overall goals of the working party are the promotion and improvement of land administration and land management in the UNECE region. The working party aims at supporting security of tenure, the introduction and improvement of cadastre and land registry, and the development of real estate markets

European Land Information Service (EULIS)

Ted Beardsall and Jon Atkey continued to represent Land Registry in the EULIS initiative, an exciting new service that enables customers to access records from connected land registration authorities across Europe. In July 2007, EULIS was reorganised into a more commercial operation, overseen by a board of directors. Ted Beardsall is now our representative on the EULIS Service Board.

European Land Registry Association (ELRA)

We remain active members of the European Land Registry Association, attending meetings in Brussels, which now forms the centre of ELRA's activities. ELRA was established in Portugal in 2004 and was formed in order to focus on the legal aspects of conveyancing, land registration and security of transactions; to actively participate and advise as appropriate in relation to the development of new European legislation affecting the issue of secured interests in land and property and to contribute effectively to future EU policy in respect of land registration.

EuroGeographics

EuroGeographics is an umbrella organisation representing mapping and cadastral agencies across Europe. The members of EuroGeographics are working to deliver the European Spatial Data Infrastructure to help governments, businesses and citizens to enjoy a safe and sustainable future. Land Registry has continued to provide input at the meetings of EuroGeographics, despite not officially being members of the organisation.

Justice Assistance Network (JAN)

The Justice Assistance Network, launched in May 2007, aims to facilitate and develop information sharing and co-ordination on UK justice sector capacity building initiatives in developing and transitional countries. The Network is jointly managed by the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO). Jon Atkey is the representative for Land Registry at the meetings of the JAN.



Projects and associated work

Our objectives were:

- to seek to respond positively to requests to participate in consortia bids for overseas project work
- continue to respond to direct invitations from overseas governments and from organisations such as the UNECE, World Bank, and to provide practical support, technical assistance and advice.
- continue to maintain and administer a register of qualified Land Registry staff available to provide assistance overseas
- continue progressively to raise the profile of the Unit and its role, and develop and maintain promotional material explaining the international role of Land Registry and available services.

During the year, we provided direct input to projects in Bermuda, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Slovakia.

Bermuda

In May 2007, Richard Fearnley, Land Registrar at Durham Office, assisted the Attorney General's Office in Bermuda with the preparation of appropriate legislation for the introduction of land registration by producing a policy brief identifying the requirements for such legislation.

Nigeria

Working in a number of Nigerian states and in conjunction with the Federal Government, Jon Llewellyn from Wales Office and Andrew Smith from York Sub-Office have continued to provide land administration consultancy support to the ongoing Security, Justice and Growth Programme, funded by DFID and managed by the British Council in Nigeria.

Sierra Leone

In March, we provided support to the DFID funded National Private Sector Development Strategy Project in Sierra Leone. Andrew Smith and Jon Llewellyn carried out an investigation into the current situation regarding land registration in Sierra Leone – focusing primarily on the Freetown metropolitan area.

The output was a report containing recommendations for the development of a forward strategy for improvement in this sector, with the emphasis upon facilitation of economic opportunity and growth.

Slovakia

In Spring 2007, Jon Atkey and David Mercer, Business Test Analyst in the EBIS team, embarked on a project aimed at strengthening the efficiency of Cadastral services in the Slovak Republic. This work was generated from a successful EU Twinning Light project bid in conjunction with Registers of Scotland. The project involved supporting the Slovak Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Authority in its aim of attaining a well-trained body of staff that will be able to apply administrative procedures with a high degree of efficiency and thus ensure the delivery of high quality services to the public. The work on this project continued into 2007/8.



Identifying and exploring opportunities to provide assistance

In line with our stated objectives, we have continued to explore further opportunities to join consortia bids for overseas consultancy where appropriate to our own field of experience and expertise.

As a result, we have worked together with a range of other public sector or commercial organisations in putting together new bids or expressions of interest for work in, among other, Ghana, Latin America (Brazil, Ecuador and Mexico), Lesotho, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda and St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

Register of staff available to provide assistance overseas

We have updated our database of staff who have expressed an interest in international work and have also sought to provide new opportunities for involvement in our international activities. In the past year we have expanded the pool of staff with international experience as a result of engagements in overseas project work and other opportunities to represent Land Registry internationally. In addition we have drawn on a wider pool of staff to assist us with the delivery of study tours through the presentation of land registration issues and policies to increasing numbers of overseas visitors.

Promotion and publicity

The main channels for promoting and publicising the work of the Unit, as in previous years, have been our web site and the opportunities to talk about our work and to provide written material at the various international conferences we have attended. We have continued to work with colleagues in Land Registry's marketing and communications team to keep our promotional material up to date and have published reports on events held throughout the year.

General comments

Work of the Advisor

Once again we wish to express our gratitude to John Manthorpe, the Unit's Advisor, for the support, advice and guidance provided to the members of the Unit and for his valued contribution to Land Registry's international activities during the Unit's fifth year of operation. We wish him a very long and happy retirement.



2008/9 Objectives

Objective A

Act as a focal point for all overseas enquiries and as an organisational centre for all incoming and outgoing international activities.

Objective B

Act as a central knowledge and information centre, holding literature, legislation and documentation relating to overseas registries and registration systems.

Objective C

Build and maintain working relationships and contacts with overseas registries and other organisations active in the sphere of land administration. This will be achieved through day-to-day contacts, the organisation and coordination of study visits and secondments and, where appropriate, attendance at international conferences and symposia.

Objective D

Provide input into Land Registry's educational and development programmes as required.

Objective E

Maintain and administer a register of qualified Land Registry staff available to provide assistance overseas.

Objective F

Progressively raise the profile of the Unit and its role, and develop and maintain promotional material explaining the international role of Land Registry and available services.

Objective G

Seek to respond positively to requests to participate in consortia bids for overseas project work.

Objective H

Respond to direct invitations from overseas governments and from organisations such as the UNECE, World Bank, and to provide practical support, technical assistance and advice.