My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege and honour for me to welcome you to my book launch and to be part of a major new procedure in England & Wales in assisting in resolution of family financial disputes. The warmth and encouragement from colleagues, friends throughout the country as to the book and this event tonight has been overwhelming.

Sir James Munby I thank you for joining us tonight and for your encouragement concerning my book and Family Law Arbitration. Such encouragement is and will continue to be a great boost to arbitration. I am sure your authoritative stand in respect of the importance and benefits of Family Law Arbitration will bring home to those within the profession as well as those outside, how arbitration can assist individuals often at a time when they are most stressed.

I also thank Sir Peter Singer, Tony Roe, Andrzej Bojarski in assisting me with the book, their observation and enthusiastic encouragement.

HHJ Cryan as Chairman of the Institute of Family Law Arbitration Advisory Committee has been immensely helpful in assisting and arranging today’s event and most particularly in regard to his comments on my book, I thank you.

To my secretary Laraine and to my wife Philippa and my two sons, and to all my colleagues at D R Sheridan LLP Solicitors a huge thanks for their unstinting support and assistance and putting up with me particularly in these last few months.

The Inner Temple have generously sponsored this evening, for which I thank them not only for their generosity but also for their help and assistance to make this evening possible, and to Novitas the litigation loan company who assist those who may be capital rich but liquidity poor, in pursuing their financial claims. I also thank Cheryl Willis who is a superb independent financial adviser trained in collaborative procedure and advises on family financial dispute claims.

Being involved in a new family procedure accepted and recognised by the judiciary enabling resolution of family financial disputes between parties unable to resolve their matters by themselves is not only fascinating but extremely exciting. Already a number of parties whose matters have been simmering for years between them causing immense stress, friction and unpleasantness have had their matters resolved through Family Law Arbitration. It is beginning to show its worth.

Unlike mediation and the collaborative process which are immensely important in assisting resolution of family financial disputes, the great advantage of arbitration is not only that the parties need make only one decision together that is to agree to pursue their matter by arbitration but that the Award of the Arbitrator is final and binding. It ends the matter, whether it be all the financial issues between the parties or one discrete issue that is perhaps causing an impasse preventing finality and settlement to the other outstanding issues.

Arbitration also has the advantage in the international field in that although the jurisdiction of arbitration is England & Wales known as “the seat” the actual venue of the arbitration can take place anywhere. It gives the opportunity as is experienced by the Courts today of overseas clients enjoying the benefits and security of English Law.

I could with the passion I have for arbitration continue setting out the many benefits that arbitration has over all other procedures. However, I would like to mention just one, that being in arbitration no party is on the sideline observing what their legal representative or the Arbitrator is doing on their behalf whilst they remain silent. The parties take a full part in the conduct of the arbitration.

 Arbitration can work with mediation in that during arbitration a matter can be referred to a mediator if it appears a particular issue can be resolved in that process and mediators who face an issue which is holding up the process of mediation can refer a specific matter to arbitration.

I do hope my book and this book launch with so many eminent members of the judiciary, the Bar and solicitors here tonight will result in drawing Family Law Arbitration to the attention of both those within and outside the profession, and that they become aware that arbitration can assist in cases no matter what level of value is in dispute, the benefit on costs, the speed and efficiency in procedure, confidentiality, the continuity of the decision maker throughout the case, the decision of the Arbitrator being final and binding and being aware the matter is adjudicated by a specialist in the field of family financial disputes.

Thank you to the Institute of Family Law Arbitrators, Resolution and the Law Society for the wonderful publication, and thank you all for joining me tonight on this very special day. Please enjoy the rest of the evening.