

Editorial

This issue is largely devoted to article versions of some of the excellent presentations at the BIALL Study Conference in Cork. It was another successful event, marked I thought by the uniformly high standard of the presentations. I regret that not all are represented here. Those who were able to attend the Conference will have noted that a number of presentations were extemporised – and I am enormously grateful to those who have turned their notes into articles.

I have strained mightily to avoid making the point that the theme of the Conference, Keeping the Customer Satisfied, was exemplified in the delivery of one service, namely the Conference itself – but it appears that temptation has proved too much. There was an excellent balance too in the presentations which were principally of interest to those in the academic world and those principally of interest to those working in firms of solicitors – as well as enough that was outside the box.

Other conference reports feature in this issue too; and there are more to come in the next. It is a measure of the maturity of the profession that there are so many well attended conferences in various parts of the world – each with something special to offer. The report from each of these conferences ends with a call for more BIALL members to apply for bursaries. It seems to me that it is quite extraordinary that such calls are made. I would have expected the relevant BIALL committee to require bouncers equipped with long sharp sticks to keep marauding applicants at bay. If I were eligible, I would be braving pointed sticks to gain a subsidised trip to foreign parts. Indeed, the appeal of foreign conferences is not limited to satisfaction in recovering more than 10 years' membership fees in conference fees or travel grants. The appeal also arises from the opportunity which foreign conferences give to widen intellectual and career horizons. Travel broadens the mind – but it is not the breadth which is gained from hours spent on the trip back to Tooting Bec that counts – it is the opportunity to interact with other cultures which counts. Now it may seem grandiose to put a chat with law librarians from New Zealand in the same

category as a desert meeting with Berbers – and frankly it is – but at least both represent a learning opportunity and may make you look at things from a different perspective.

I risk making myself unpopular with law librarians from a number of different jurisdictions but it seems to me that there is a special opportunity just around the corner. In July 2002 the American Association of Law Libraries is holding its annual conference in Florida. I am not going to join the list of sympathisers following the events of September 11th and suggest that you show some sort of solidarity by attending. I have a far more practical point to make. The AALL Conference is, by all accounts, a unique experience and many BIALL members can testify that it is a mind-expanding experience. You will never find a cheaper time to go, nor cheaper US accommodation. Why not go this year?

David Gee

There have been a number of changes to the make-up of the Editorial Board, although technically they have effect for the next issue. However, one figure departing from the Board has been an outstanding contributor to the journal in both its forms.

David Gee has been a member of the Board for more than ten years. Nobody seems entirely sure for how long – a confusion much increased by the fact that he does not appear to have aged a day in that period. David has been a tremendous support to me in the time I have been involved with the BIALL journal, and I know his support has also been greatly valued by successive Chairs. He has always contributed constructively and with great good humour at meetings and has led the organisation of contributions on a number of occasions with absolute precision – making my job for those issues very easy indeed. He has also, with others, contributed the keystone of the journal, *Current Awareness*.

Thank you, David.