

Editorial

Welcome to this latest issue of *Legal Information Management (LIM)*. This issue is unusual as it is a two in one offering: a bumper issue combining the autumn 21(3) and winter 21(4) editions of the journal. This has been done on at least one previous occasion in the journal's history, but not for quite a while. The reason this time round is to allow the editor to catch-up on his publishing schedule having fallen a little behind over the past twenty months or so as a result of work pressures relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. There is every expectation that things will be brought back on track from the spring and summer 2022 issues onwards!

COVID-19 AND LOCKDOWN CHALLENGES

Covid-19, lockdowns and the experiences and challenges it has brought forth continue to be at the forefront of our minds. At the time of writing, and with the festive season upon us, once again we find ourselves facing more uncertainty with the emergence of the Covid variant, Omicron. Government advice once again suggests that, where possible, working from home is the best option to try to reduce the spread of this new variant. Some restrictions have returned in the UK while a new 'lockdown' has not (yet) been imposed. International travel is facing some limitations and businesses in all areas of society are starting to feel the strain once more. There remains much uncertainty in both our personal and professional lives. This joint issue opens with an article in relation to the pandemic written from an Australian perspective by two colleagues working at Monash University in Melbourne. Kay Tucker is the Faculty and Institute Liaison Manager, HASS at the Monash University Library and Becky Batagol is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law and the Monash Sustainable Development Institute. To quote directly from their abstract, they focus on the important lessons to be learned by universities and their university libraries when crisis and disaster occur. These lessons include: 'actively recognising and responding to structural inequalities amongst students and staff; organising services so that all can participate to their fullest ability; providing students with opportunities for social connection, enhanced digital capabilities, safe and inclusive spaces and accessible materials; as well as flexible employment practices.' Their article is entitled, 'Pandemic pressures in universities and their libraries: a view from Australia' and focuses on the first two years of the pandemic, 2020 and 2021.

LIBRARY DESIGN

For the second article, the LIM editor briefly turns author and indulges himself in a subject that is close to his heart - that being 'library design'. The summer 2021 *LIM* featured three articles about different aspects of library design and

refurbishment projects. Continuing with that theme, this time it is the Squire Law Library that is the focus in the context of modern design with reference to the building that it occupies together with the University of Cambridge's Faculty of Law. The building, known today as the David Williams Building, opened to students some 26 years ago, and it is 25 years since the building was officially opened by HM The Queen. It is a particularly striking piece of contemporary architecture and the author has known the building as a user throughout its lifespan. The article looks at the architecture in the context of the many iconic buildings across Cambridge, considers some of the challenges of modern design for a library and sees a bright future for the building as a centre of excellence for learning and research in law. The building was designed by the global architectural firm, Foster + Partners. The article is entitled, 'The Squire Law Library; Celebrating Foster's Design: a Return to Forever.'

FIVE SCOTTISH LAW LIBRARIES

After the opening two articles there follows the first of two themes. It has been a while since *LIM* focused on law libraries and legal collections in Scotland. In fact, the last time this was featured was in 2009. The theme returns here with a look at five law libraries and the editor is immensely grateful to Sara Berry, the Librarian at the Advocates Library in Edinburgh, for helping to commission this selection of articles.

Common to each of the articles is an account of the history of each library, recent and current developments and the difficulties posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as future challenges and aspirations. Some excellent photographs accompany each of the articles. Sara's own article starts proceedings and is entitled, 'The Advocates Library, Edinburgh'. James Hamilton writes about the Signet Library at the Society of Writers to Her Majesty's Signet which is a private society of Scottish solicitors. Sarah Louise McDonald then writes on 'The Law Library at the University of Edinburgh: a criminal history, a troublesome future.' I'm delighted to say that this piece is made available as an open access article. Jennifer Findley's article focuses on the SCTS (Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service) Library Services and, last but not least, Christine Wilcox gives an insight into the library service at the Society of Solicitors in the Supreme Courts of Scotland (otherwise known as, The SSC Society). I hope that in future issues of *LIM* it might be possible to include accounts of other Scottish law libraries and legal collections.

FIVE PAPERS FROM THE BIALL ONLINE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2021

An excellent programme of presentations was evident at the BIALL Online Annual Conference 2021 and this

forms the basis of the second theme of this joint issue. The event took place virtually (for the second year running) from Wednesday 9th to Friday 11th June 2021. While it has not been possible to feature all the presentations and lectures given at the event, the following five articles give some sense of the wide range of subjects and interests covered. The event was a great success and the BIALL Conference Committee are to be congratulated on an excellent and stimulating programme of talks.

Janet Kearney begins this section by 'making the case for law tech' and discusses legal technology programming in the context of the practice-ready law graduates of today. Clare Brown's focus is on a number of practical ways of improving current awareness services. Her case study looks at how library and information professionals can control the flow of information so that end-users can avoid being overwhelmed by news.

Mary Jackson provides an article about 'the story of LawCare: mental health and wellbeing in the legal community past, present and future'. This article is particularly relevant in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and the many challenges that it has presented in relation to peoples' professional and personal lives. Erin Gow's article is entitled 'Identifying Red Herrings in American Legal Research' and, finally in this section, Greg Bennett's piece describes the process of 'building an academic law library from scratch' at Goldsmiths, University of London where a new LLB law degree was recently established.

CURRENT INTERESTS

On this occasion there is just a single article under the 'current interests' heading and that is written by Kristen Rowlett, International Law Librarian at Texas A&M University School of Law. The article is entitled, 'The Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals: an Essential Tool for Researchers and Practitioners'.

LEGAL INFORMATICS

In recent issues of *Legal Information Management* there have been a number of articles in relation to the very topical subjects of artificial intelligence and algorithms in the law and legal information contexts. Following on from those previous articles, this issue includes an academic piece on legal informatics. It is entitled, 'Emerging Legal Informatics Towards Legal Innovation: Current Status and Future Challenges and Opportunities' and it is authored by Sugam Sharma, Samia Gamoura, Deva Prasad and Arti Aneja.

CURRENT AWARENESS

As usual, this issue of *LIM* closes with the current awareness section compiled by Katherine Read and Heather Memess of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies Library in London.

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David Wills
Editor