

# Editorial

Following on from the initial topic of my Editorial in the Spring issue about changes of personnel at the top of Sweet & Maxwell; the general feeling of duopoly emerging within the legal publishing world; and many moans about the publishers being expressed with great regularity via LIS-LAW, I rather expected that the Publishers Forum at the BIALL Conference, which took place earlier this month in Cardiff, would have been a reasonably sparky affair. However this was not to be. We were treated to a relatively anodyne and party line exposition from the publishers attending, with only the presence of Ian Brushwood from Hammicks to act as devils advocate and inject a little more interest into the proceedings. I gather we have to inform the publishers beforehand of the topics that are likely to be raised and by the time those had been exhausted there was little time for questions from the floor.

The Conference was once again a great success and huge thanks are due to the organising committee who obviously put an enormous amount of work into the arrangements and particularly the evening entertainments. Although we now have assistance from a professional conference organising company, there is still much work to be done by the Committee and it is a tribute to them that everything ran so smoothly. Both Cardiff and the weather did us proud – it is a beautiful city and I am sure many of us will return to visit it again – possibly not in the alcoholic haze which is one of the hallmarks of a true Conference attendee, although someone was heard to say that while it takes a week to get over a BIALL conference it takes two weeks to get over an Australian conference!

I think my only personal reservation was that perhaps we could have had a few more practical papers, because although it was interesting to hear about our foreign colleagues' experiences there was a perceived feeling amongst attendees that they would appreciate some papers next year which address day to day issues which affect us all and which we can share and hopefully solve. The parallel sessions on the Saturday afternoon were very interesting and went some way to answering this reservation, but of course it was impossible to attend all those of relevance to us. The sessions on Monday morning were also good, with Prue Presser from Phillips Fox in Melbourne giving us a most entertaining analysis of the "Kylie thing" - which she was sorry to discover, upon arriving on these shores, that we haven't yet grown out of, whilst at the same time she gave us a most impressive talk on the new online legal research training course at Melbourne University which she has developed with Nikki MacLaurin Smith. We definitely hope to publish this paper, and we plan to publish a selection of the other papers in the next edition of LIM, as is our normal practice.

BIALL is at a crossroads in its life as we move on towards holding more sophisticated and expensive conferences whilst at the same time attempting to undertake lots of

good projects for members, both of which activities cost money and for the second year running, the Association has made a deficit. It is therefore good to learn that Council is seriously addressing the issue of our forward strategic direction with an away day planned for late in July.

Valerie Stevenson was the author of our draft strategic plan, which will form the basis of our discussions, and I cannot finish this part of my Editorial without paying tribute to her for the exemplary two years she has put in as Chair of the Association. I am sure everyone will agree with me that she has done a first rate job in running Council and making sure that the Association has become involved in all sorts of activities. Just reading through the reports of the various committees makes it very obvious that although we are spending the money, as Valerie intended, we are doing a huge amount with it for the benefit of members. I am sure our best wishes go with her as she moves to her new job in Liverpool later this summer.

This issue of LIM has several foci. We have an article on aspects of e-government. John Bennett and Stephen Cirell of Eversheds, who are leading experts on this subject, managed to find time to write about the evolution of e-government within local authorities. We hope to continue this theme in our next issue.

As is usual we include the report of the SLS/BIALL report on university law library provision, this time meticulously prepared by Peter Clinch. We are also pleased to publish part one of a Caribbean legal bibliography prepared by Joan Brathwaite of the University of the West Indies. We are hoping that in future we will be able to include more contributions from overseas authors.

We have a most interesting contribution from David Gee on his study trip to New York which focusses on a comparison of reader services provision in the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies and in New York, Yale and Columbia University libraries.

Emily Allbon has been working very hard at City University over the past couple of years setting up a website for the Law Faculty and she shares her trials and tribulations but also her successes with us, as the site is now up and running. We also hear from Sarah Carter and Melissa Bowden on progress to date on the Lawpaths project.

Andrew Charlesworth and Valerie Stevenson have contributed articles on the ever-encroaching tentacles of government surveillance and related issues of privacy, with particular emphasis on how this new regulatory climate affects us in our day to day work as librarians. Valerie looks at the potential effect in the US of the PATRIOT Act and Andrew analyses recent legislative developments in this country.

Our final theme covers the availability of legal materials on the Internet in Scotland and Ireland. John Sibbald has written a thought provoking paper on the need for a Scottish government portal and John Furlong

has produced a comprehensive listing and description of Irish legal and semi-legal sites.

This issue marks the retirement of Jonathan Gordon-Till as Chair of the Editorial Board and I would like to thank him for his help and support during my first year as Editor. He has had a long stint as Chair, which has involved him in both finding a new Editor and a new publisher. I would also like to thank Lesley Young from the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies who stepped into the breach when Sam Weston-Smith was injured and unable to take over the Current Awareness column from June Tomlinson as planned. Sam is now on board and we are pleased that she has decided to help Gillian Sands out with the column. Sam is the Senior

Library Assistant at IALS in charge of Book Acquisitions. She previously worked at the Whipple Library, Cambridge University as RSLP Project Officer and prior to that she was a foreign language cataloguer at the University of Cambridge Library.

Finally, I am sorry to have to announce that Willi Steiner has died. He was very well known to many of us and I am reproducing below the short note which Jules Winterton prepared. He and David Wills of the Squire Law Library in Cambridge will be preparing a full obituary for the next issue of LIM.

**Christine Miskin**

## **W.A.F.P. Steiner LLM (London), MA (Cantab), FLA, of Gray's Inn, Barrister-at-Law**

I am sad to report the death of Willi Steiner in late May. Willi was Librarian of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies from 1968 to 1982 and also served as the Secretary of the Institute from 1968 to 1971.

Willi had previously worked at the British Library of Political and Economic Science and at the Squire Law Library of the University of Cambridge. Willi was General Editor of the Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals from 1968 to 1984, having served as Assistant Editor under Howard Drake. He served as a joint general reporter to the International Congress of Comparative Law both in Tehran and in Budapest for the section on documentation and research in law. He had a wide range of international contacts and was a highly respected member of the profession in the UK and overseas. He served on committees of the American Association of Law Libraries and as Vice President of the International Association of

Law Libraries. He was a consultant to several major law libraries and constructed classification systems for the Squire Law Library and for the European University Institute in Fiesole where he was appointed Visiting Professor during a period from 1980 to 1982.

The British and Irish Association of Law Librarians conferred Life Membership on Willi for his outstanding and distinguished service to the profession. Willi was a founder member of the Association and President of the Association from 1985 to 1988 and the first President to be invited from amongst the Association's own members.

Many staff at IALS remember him and do so with great respect as well as fondness.

**Jules Winterton**  
*Librarian*  
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