

Editorial

The excitement of commissioning and gathering the content for the winter issue of *Legal Information Management* (LIM) was tempered by the extremely sad news of the sudden, and untimely, death of one of our colleagues and friends in the legal information profession. This issue commences with a piece remembering and celebrating the life and career of Sarah Spells, Law Librarian and Deputy Head of Teaching and Research Support at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and BIALL Council Member. Her many professional skills and her commitment, her infectious enthusiasm and her warm personality will be very greatly missed.

SELECTED PAPERS FROM THE BIALL CONFERENCE, 2012

The BIALL Conference, which took place in Belfast in June 2012, yielded many fine presentations. It is a very great honour to be able to include in this journal the keynote speech entitled, "Lines on Maps and the Frontiers of Legal Research", delivered by John Larkin QC, the Attorney General for Northern Ireland. During the course of his lecture he reminded the audience of the true value of law librarianship. In 2004, Lord Woolf, then Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, gave the Squire Centenary Lecture in Cambridge during which he said, "Great law libraries are the treasures of a legal system. They are the warehouse where we find the law". I was reminded of these words as John Larkin brought his lecture to a conclusion and declared, "Lawyers can (just about) be lawyers without law librarians but it is only in partnership with librarians that excellence in lawyering is ever possible. For my part I am grateful for the wonderful possibilities law librarians bring into being and nurture every day." As a dedicated law librarian, Sarah Spells would have smiled at these encouraging sentiments!

A number of other exciting presentations, given at the conference, are also included here. It was a great pleasure to commission papers given by two distinguished professors from Queen's University, Belfast. John Morison challenges us on "What makes an important case" and outlines the ESRC funded research study on the "Creation, Transmission and Validation of Legal Knowledge" while Gordon Anthony, also involved in the aforementioned study, provides an interesting overview of Northern Ireland public law.

Emily Allbon, the Wildy BIALL Law Librarian of the Year 2012 and a regular contributor to LIM, and her teaching colleague from City University, Sanmeet Kaur Dua, outline their project to create an 'app' for law students in relation to legal research skills and learning. Jas Breslin, the new President Elect of BIALL, writes about the centralised reference management system implemented by the library team at the U.S. law firm, Morrison & Foerster. Sara Batts, Susanna Winter and,

again, Jas Breslin combine to discuss some of the complex issues surrounding communication and culture when working with colleagues in legal offices around the world.

During the conference this year, I was pleased to chair the parallel session entitled, "From Oxford to Williamsburg: the Evolution of Legal Education and Law Libraries Across the Pond". The two papers, given by Ruth Bird of the Bodleian Law Library at Oxford and Jim Heller representing the law library at The College of William & Mary, form the basis of two articles about the history of the oldest law school in the English speaking world (i.e. Oxford) and the second oldest University in America, and first law school, in the U.S. (The College of William & Mary). The presentations also acknowledged the historical connection between these two venerable institutions.

OCCASIONAL SERIES

Beyond the papers given at this BIALL Conference, the winter issue of LIM contains another invaluable contribution from Lesley Dingle's growing archive relating to eminent scholars. On this occasion, she relays her conversations with the great legal historian, Emeritus Professor Toby Milsom; a truly fascinating insight into an extraordinary scholar.

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES & CURRENT ISSUES

Under the two headings, *International Perspectives* and *Current Issues* are two pieces that, in different ways, follow on from the autumn theme which featured articles on open access and free legal information. Claire Bonello, of the French National Library, writes on the French collaborative project to digitise, preserve and make accessible, heritage law collections. John Bell, Professor of Law at Cambridge, addresses the issues and challenges facing law schools, academic lawyers and the legal publishing industry in the light of the recent Finch Report and the subsequent response by the Government which has adopted an open access policy to publicly funded research. His paper was originally delivered to delegates attending The Society of Legal Scholars Annual Conference in September 2012 and I am grateful to him for allowing it to be published in LIM.

CURRENT AWARENESS

As usual I am grateful to Katherine Read and Laura Griffiths for compiling the final element of the issue; that being the Current Awareness section.

David Wills
Editor