

BIALL 40th Anniversary: a Timeline

Introduction

On the occasion of the Association's 30th Birthday, Mary Blake produced *A History of the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians 1969–1999*, to which members are directed for a detailed account of the aims and objectives, activities and publications of the Association during that period. Details of the past ten years can be found in the History which is available on the website. The following account is intended to draw readers' attention to just some of the Association's most important milestones in its journey through the past 40 years, including notable events in the history of *Legal Information Management*.

I am grateful to Mary Blake and Barbara Tearle for their contribution to this article

1969

BIALL was first established on 16th April 1969 in Harrogate by 17 founding members attending the Second Workshop on Law Librarianship, the idea of an Association having been discussed at the first Workshop, which took place in Harrogate in February 1968. An ad hoc Committee was set up comprising Wallace Breem (Inner Temple); Don Daintree (Leeds College of Commerce); Betty Moys (University of Glasgow); Willi Steiner (IALS) and Derek Way (University of Liverpool). The initial plan had been to set up a UK section of the International Association of Law Libraries.

The first AGM was held in September 1969, when Don Daintree was elected Chairman and Wallace Breem became Secretary and Treasurer. The name of the Association was agreed as the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians and affiliation to another organisation never happened. A Constitution and Rules and Regulations were agreed. The Association was to be run by an Executive Committee.

The initial membership fee was set at two guineas (£2.10) for all (personal) members and one guinea for associate (institutional) members. These rates proved to be unsustainable to finance the proposed activities of the Association and, in 1970, were increased to £2 for personal members and £3 for institutional members, and the distinction between the two types of membership in terms of fees has remained ever since.

The November 1969 membership list showed 29 personal members and 18 institutional members. There was only one law firm librarian in the list – Gillian Bull of Norton Rose Botterell & Roche. (See Gillian's book review at page XXX of this issue).

The Sub-Committee on Publications was set up and has proved to be the longest standing BIALl Committee. It became a Standing Committee in 1978.

1970

The first issue of the *Law Librarian* appeared in April under the Editorship of Betty Moys. It was reviewed in the *AALL Law Library Journal* in 1971, where it was described as "surprisingly good considering the newness of the organisation" From 1971 until 2002 the journal was published by Sweet & Maxwell, who, in the very early days of the Association, had been represented by Alan Appleby. He gave us many years of support and guidance until his untimely death in 1978. Since 2002, Cambridge University Press has taken over responsibility for the journal and has been immensely supportive.

Our Conference was held at Liverpool University in September 1970 on the theme of *Law Librarianship – the next 10 years*. Visits were arranged to Liverpool Law Society and the Faculty of Law library. Accommodation was in halls of residence and the fee was £10. Thirty five members attended and the dinner was attended by both the University Vice-Chancellor and the Librarian. Nine of the 35 are still members of the Association.

Six law firm librarians were now members!

1971

The Ad Hoc Committee on Co-operation reported, resulting in the setting up of Committees on Acquisitions, Automation, Training, Legal Thesauri (later Cataloguing and Classification) and the Duplicates Exchange Scheme.

1972

The first BIALl training course entitled *Educating the Library User – a One Day Seminar for Law Librarians and Law Teachers* was held at Trent Polytechnic. Fee £6. A profit of £36.60 was made! See also In Memoriam for Paul Richardson at page 154 of this issue.

1973

Formation of the Standards Sub-Committee – in 1973 there were no published standards for law libraries

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available in any common law country, though drafts did exist in Australia, Canada and the USA. The SPTL (Society of Public Teachers of Law) had published their *Statement of Proposed Minimum Library Holdings* and the committee studied these drafts. The *BIALL Standards for Law Libraries* were published in 1981 and recommendations for stock were published separately in January 1983. The committee was disbanded in 1981.

1976

The Law Library Provision Standing Committee was set up to deal with

“All matters relating to the provision of legal literature and law library services”.

It did not disband until 1999, when its responsibilities were allocated to other committees.

The first edition of the *Manual of Law Librarianship*, under the Editorship of Betty Moys, was published. By the end of the year, 1,586 copies had been sold at £15 each, earning the Association over £1,035 in royalties. It was positively reviewed and was a considerable achievement for BIALL and the contributors.

1977

Don Raistrick took over from Betty Moys as Editor of the *Law Librarian*.

1978

A two-day course on *Library Provision for Law Readers* was held jointly with the Library Association and was organised by the Standing Committee on Education and Training.

1979

In 1979 the Society for Computers and Law published a report *A National Law Library – the way ahead – a proposal for a computer assisted legal information retrieval system for the UK* which contained proposals which were revolutionary at the time. We made contact with the Society in order to be involved in the project and a Working Party on Computerised Legal Information Retrieval was set up to investigate the report and make recommendations.

The Editorial Board of the *Law Librarian* was set up “To advise the editor on all matters pertaining to the *Law Librarian*.”

1980

Twenty-five law firm librarians were now members.

1981

Our first overseas visit was made when 14 members visited Brussels for three days.

1982

The Conference at Warwick was the first one to make a loss.

1983

A new Constitution and Rules and Regulations were agreed, changing the Executive Committee to a Council and setting up six standing committees – Cataloguing and Classification; Library Provision and Information Services; Education and Training; Publications; Official Publications and Editorial Board.

The first issue of the *Newsletter* under the Editorship of Diane Raper (See her article at page 163 of this issue) appeared on a trial basis. It proved to be very popular and has been published continuously ever since, recently moving from quarterly to bi-monthly publication.

1984

The first *Outlines of English Law for Law Librarians* course ran from October to May 1985. It was held in association with the Law Department of the Polytechnic of Central London.

Barbara Tearle took over as Editor of the *Law Librarian*. The first *Salary Survey* was published.

1986

Our first computer was acquired.

1987

Membership reached 370 and the post of Membership Secretary was created. Mary Blake resigned after 11 years as Hon Secretary. Membership details were now held on a computer. The second edition of the *Manual of Law Librarianship* was published, again under the Editorship of Betty Moys.

1990

Christine Miskin took over as Editor of the *Law Librarian*. The first conference in Ireland was held at Trinity College Dublin.

SIGS (Special Interest Groups) were established but they had lapsed by 1997, though the academic SIG is experiencing a revival and had a meeting at the 2009 Conference.

1992

The Working Group on Standing Committees proposed a re-structuring of committees and new terms of reference with effect from January 1993. A Standing Committee on Membership Services was established

“To provide and promote services to the membership of the Association in conformity with the strategic and financial objectives of the Council.”

The *Bibliography of Commonwealth Law Reports*, originally under the editorship of Wallace Bream and Sally Phillips, until the untimely death of the former in March 1990, was published. It received the Besterman Award from the Library Association for an outstanding bibliography.

1993

The first pre-conference seminar was held at the Canterbury Conference, given by Sylvia Webb and entitled *Making the Most of Enquiries*.

1994

A new Constitution reducing the term of office of Chair to one year, and Secretary and Treasurer to two years, with eligibility for re-election for one further term was passed, under the Chairmanship of Lynn Quiney. It also heralded the introduction of the new posts of Vice-Chair and Immediate Past-Chair. The appointment of a paid administrator was approved and Susan Frost was the first and only holder of the position.

The Birmingham Conference was the first one where hotel accommodation was used.

1995

Lawrence Eastham was appointed as the first paid Editor of the *Law Librarian*.

1996

The Conference Committee was formed and its first Chair was Michael Maher.

1998

The Web Editorial Board was set up with the first website going live in early 2000.

The first JSI (Joint Study Institute) took place in Cambridge. This was a joint initiative between BIALL, CALL (Canadian Association of Law Libraries) and AALL, to hold joint biennial meetings, with a programme of interest to all three organisations. Sixty-two delegates attended and it was a very successful event.

2000

There were 344 law firm members out of a total membership of 720 – now the largest group within the Association. The first Study Weekend was held in Edinburgh in the late Autumn.

2001

The *Law Librarian* was re-branded as *Legal Information Management* and appeared in new covers and a new typeface.

2002

Christine Miskin took over again as Editor, this time in a paid capacity. Betty Moys, a founder member and author of the *Moys Classification Scheme for Law* died.

2003

The highly successful Jobs Board was added to the website.

2004

Cambridge University Press becomes the Publisher of LIM. The Edinburgh Conference was the first one to be held at a purpose-built commercial conference centre and in a new format of three full days rather than four part days....

2009

LIM has a facelift and appears in a shiny new cover.

Christine Miskin