

Book Reviews

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DANNER, R.A. and WINTERTON, J. (eds). *The IALL International Handbook of Legal Information Management*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2011. ISBN: 9780754674771. 392 pp.

The International Handbook of Legal Information Management provides a fascinating and detailed discussion of the issues surrounding not only those directly involved with legal information with an international flavour, but all legal information professionals. The book is written by a range of experienced and very knowledgeable authors and pulls together the different strands very well.

The book has a mixture of chapters about international law librarianship itself, the nature of legal information, and where these both fit into the wider legal environment. There are some common themes running through the book, mainly the impact of globalisation and the digital dissemination of legal information. The chapters vary from information literacy to comparative law, legal practice and legal publishing to collection building in both electronic and print. One great feature of the book is that each chapter references a large number of studies and provides any interested party with a list of further reading.

The book is nicely set up by a very good discussion in chapter 1 on the definition of international law librarianship which introduces the themes mentioned above. It is not possible to talk about each chapter in the book, but it is possible to touch in more detail on some chapters that are particularly interesting, like the chapter on the 'Free Access to Law movement'. This chapter is especially important in the international context of what is happening in different jurisdictions and this coupled with the chapter on 'Digitising the World's Laws' gives an idea of the impact of globalisation and information technology and the way it has changed information provision. The snapshot of law librarianship in a range of different countries in chapter 8 was enlightening and it was almost a shame to stop at the six. The countries chosen feature a nice mixture of experiences and was not too heavily skewed towards the more traditional jurisdictions. The chapter on 'Information Literacy' was also good in the way it highlights the changing nature of legal resources, the impact this has had on how lawyers, academics, and students research and how librarians can make an impact in training legal research skills within this new environment.

One criticism of the book is that, given the distinct focus of each of the chapters, it does not flow as well as it might. This is probably down to the different authors

with different writing styles, as well as having quite a broad range of subjects and perspectives. This means that for the newcomer it can seem a little overwhelming and for those more experienced a little too disjointed to read as a complete work. There was also some overlap with some of the chapters but this is to be expected because of the nature of the subject. It would not be something to be read cover-to-cover as a complete handbook or practical guide as such, but it does allow for the reader to dip in and discover the different aspects as suits their purpose and interest. This seems to be the intention of the book as evidenced by Richard Susskind in the foreword where he says, "It will provide law librarians not with a manual of best practice for the administration of law libraries..." but "...a definitive guide to the central issues of policy and strategy that are of direct concern to the progressive law librarian (and the legal profession) of tomorrow".

So who would benefit from reading the book? The book states in the preface that "It provides resources, analysis and considered studies both for seasoned international law librarians, those about to enter the field, and others interested in the evolution of legal information in the twenty-first century" which is casting the net quite wide. There are some chapters that provide very useful historical background to the subject for example the first chapter and the two chapters on building a collection. However with other chapters there is a presumption of a certain amount of knowledge that may be a little bit off putting to somebody new. For most chapters there are ample references to further reading that would aid a newcomer to discover a fuller picture and so that is not of itself a reason to dismiss.

There is also a very strong focus on academic law librarianship and collections management in some of the chapters, which is not surprising given that a large number of the authors are in an academic role. Because of this some of the points may be lost or not relevant to those in the commercial sector. However chapter 5 focuses specifically on the 'Global Legal Practice' and as the book deals with very broad themes that affect all sectors it is not something that should put off those in law firms in investing in a copy. The evidence provided in the book in the form of robust studies and statistics, as well as the case studies, can be used to further development and discussion of information provision in both academic and commercial settings alike.

Overall it is a good read and something that should be bought, not as a definitive guide to help in the practical day to day running of an information service, but of a collection of interesting and engaging essays that can

promote ideas and discussions about international law librarianship and its future role.

Katherine Jackson
Legal Research Librarian
Bodleian Law Library

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GOODMAN, A. BERRIDGE, C. and GOODMAN, S.
The Walking Guide to Lawyers' London. 2nd edition.
London: Nova law and Finance Ltd, 2011. ISBN:
9781908013019. 307 pp.

Initially this book does not seem like a walking guide, being a heavy hardback with glossy pages and without any derogatory connotations, more like a coffee table book, and far too substantial to carry around as a guide on a walk. On reading the introduction it becomes clear the nine suggested walks covered are used as a means of examining the history and architecture of the legal quarter of London without following the usual chronological pattern. The new edition is justified by developments such as the Supreme Court opening in 2009 and many of the buildings mentioned such as Temple Bar having been renovated since 2000. Much of the text concentrates on the past and traditions, but it is also a snapshot of the present which is likely to see further changes in the legal profession over the next decade and beyond.

Of the nine walks, seven start from underground stations and two at street level making them practical and accessible from stations. The first walk is circular and the eighth almost circular, so easy to follow. A great deal of history is packed in without being boring. The author frequently digresses with snippets of fascinating information, such as literary connections to Thackeray and Dickens, to

more recent items including shots of filming the Da Vinci Code. The routes of the walks are in the generous margins beside the text. The maps are clearly numbered with each place of interest and straightforward to follow.

The only real criticism of the book would be a lack of a pocket in the front or back cover with a fold up map which could be carried around on the walks with the simple step by step instructions and plans at the start of each walk. None of the walks are particularly long or arduous but some walkers unfamiliar with the areas would probably also prefer an indication of how long the walks are likely to take or at least distances covered, although in fairness much will depend on whether walkers are side tracked to visit places such as Prince Henry's room with the Samuel Pepys Society Museum, if open. A richly visual book lavishly illustrated with some beautiful colour photographs of interiors not always available to public view it is a delight to dip into. Photographs of statues above eye level on buildings provides a practical reminder of what to look for along with less likely to be seen pictures such as Ede and Ravenscroft, the oldest bespoke tailors in the world busy making barristers wigs. The bibliography is an unexpectedly useful bonus including journals and pamphlets, as well as books, and the index is particularly good and includes references to illustrations.

There is an engagingly wistful tone of nostalgia creating a very pleasurable read. A beautiful book which would make a sumptuous gift for anyone interested in finding out more about the history of law and legal buildings in London and keen to experience the walks.

Mandy Webster
Library & Information Services Manager
Browne Jacobson LLP