

# Editorial

## United States Legal Information – Bricks, Books and Bytes

The law of the United States is at once familiar and unfamiliar to British legal researchers. Aware of the common history, we are perplexed by differences of organization, practice and terminology. This edition of LIM gathers together a varied collection of contributions on the American theme. We have been fortunate in being able to enlist the help of friends and colleagues in the United States, as well as several UK librarians with experience in the field.

Blair Kauffman and Mary Jane Kelsey of Yale Law School Library, one of the world's premier law libraries, describe how a large traditional academic library, where the printed book is still a valued resource, can use 21<sup>st</sup> century technology to deliver material without users needing to visit the library. Ruth Bird and Roger Cook give us clear descriptions of the primary sources of statutes and case law, print and electronic, while your guest editor provides one or two severely practical hints under both headings. Deborah Paulus-Jagric of New York University Law School Library tells a cautionary but instructive tale of the tortuous road to achieving the legislative intent of Congress, in an area of continuing interest in both the US and the UK – animal rights.

Our last guide to sources comes from Dave Rogers at the Chicago head office of the law firm Sidley Austin, who helps us with corporation law and corporate records. Joan Batchen and Linda Maynard give us insights into the workings of their respective US law firm libraries, one at the centre of operations (again in Chicago) and the other "on the fringes" in the London office of a multi-site library and knowledge management operation. Finally Vanessa Hayward describes both the historic and contemporary American collections in the Middle Temple Library, which has a long tradition of collecting American law.

**Paul Norman**

## Current Issues

We are including the SLS/BIALL Academic Law Library Survey for 2004/2005 compiled by Peter Clinch in this issue. We will be publishing the papers from what sounds to have been a very successful Annual Study Conference in Brighton in the Winter Issue of LIM but we have persuaded Martin White to write up his paper on Selecting and Implementing Content Management Software for Intranets for this issue. Also on the technology front, Chris Wallis has written an article about legal portals as a companion to the article by Jill

Halford which appeared in the Summer Issue. Jonathan Crowhurst has followed on from his review of Liz Orna's book *Making Knowledge Visible: Communicating Knowledge Through Information Products* and his experiences at our 2004 *Changing Times, New Challenges* Conference to think more deeply about the causes and costs of bad information but he ends on a positive note as he believes as a profession we can deal with the problems!

We are grateful to Katherine Read not only for producing the usual immaculate Current Awareness column with John Greenhead, but also for sharing her experiences from her trip to Germany where she visited some major law libraries. Her article makes very interesting reading and it is quite surprising to learn that several of the libraries she visited still maintain card catalogues. Martin Vorberg, who came to our Conference this year, has written about the Bucerius Law School library. This is the first privately operated law school in Germany set up to offer prospective law students an alternative to the usual legal education provided at German state universities.

Our Checklist has been written by Fiona Durrant and is an Online Subscription Contract Checklist. Fiona has recently published a book on this subject, building on her first article which was published in LIM in 2003.

## And finally....

We welcome Patti Punch from Limerick University Library and Michael Oberwarth from Matthew Arnold & Baldwin as new members of the Board.

Cathie Jackson has decided to stand down as Book Review Editor, a task she has carried out brilliantly for the last six years. We are very grateful for all her hard work and she will be sorely missed at Editorial Board meetings where she always brought the virtue of solid and sensible academic reasoning to some of our more fanciful ideas for material!

John Greenhead has relinquished responsibility for the book section of the Current Awareness section as he has left the Institute for pastures new at the House of Lords Library. We are very grateful for all his efforts and we are pleased to welcome Laura Griffiths, who is the Academic Services Librarian at IALS and has offered to take over the task.

Finally, I would like to express my grateful thanks to Paul Norman for all the hard work he has put into this issue, not only editing the articles but also contributing one of his own. He has huge experience of all aspects of law librarianship, not only US sources, and we were determined to save some of it for posterity before he finally decides to hang up his boots and enjoy a well-earned retirement.

**Christine Miskin**