

Editorial

Here is the winter issue of *Legal information Management* (LIM) and I write with some apologies for the late arrival of this edition. 2020 has been an extraordinary year in every sense due to the Covid-19 pandemic and it can only be hoped that 2021 brings more hopeful news and some level of return to normal life and work. At the time of writing vaccines are being rolled out and administered by medical teams across the UK and Ireland. The previous issue of the journal (20(3)) focused on the impact of Covid-19 in the context of law, law libraries and the legal information world in general. Some of that theme continues here, but equally it is also time to discuss other aspects of our business beyond the pandemic.

FEATURE ARTICLE

We begin with a feature article entitled ‘The Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003: a Mere Coming of Age or Trusted Guardian of the Nation’s Treasures?’ written by Kieran Lee Marshall and Kate Faulkner. The article explores the development of legal deposit in the UK and its operation in the context of the modern deposit library. It looks at ways that current law and policy could be developed to better support deposit libraries for the benefit of librarians and users, with reference to barrier-free access to deposited resources. It also suggests three possible areas for reform.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LAW FIRM LIBRARY WORLD

I am always grateful to colleagues for volunteering to be guest editors for a theme. In this case Jas Breslin, Research & Information Services Manager at Charles Russell Speechlys LLP, kindly agreed to help coordinate a number of articles written by colleagues working in the law firm sector so as to reflect some current developments in that area of our profession. I will leave it to Jas to expand on this theme in her guest editorial piece. But, may I add my thanks to the following authors, including Jas herself who wrote one of the articles, for their contributions: Simon Heatley, Aileen Johnson, Michael Maher, Richard Tomlinson and Eleanor White. The articles cover knowledge strategy, developments in legal technology, enquiry tracking systems and the impact of Covid-19 on print collections in the law firm setting.

SELECTION OF PAPERS FROM THE BIALL ‘VIRTUAL’ CONFERENCE 2020

For the first time, the annual BIALL conference happened remotely in a ‘virtual’ space, courtesy of Zoom technology, and what a success it was! Over the course of the past twelve months life has largely shifted to a virtual

setting due to the social distancing protocols and the home-working approach that have been adopted. Communication tools, like Zoom, have allowed business interactions, meetings, lectures and conferences to continue to operate and we should be grateful for those opportunities. Of course, a conference attended ‘in-person’ offers the chance to meet others, network, to do business and, indeed, to socialise with colleagues – but those person-to-person interactions have been suspended due to the current circumstances. Hopefully, the future of conferencing will return to normal at some point very soon.

The presentations at the virtual conference in June 2020 took the form of shorter than usual sessions. Three of the talks were developed into articles and have been published here in LIM. Firstly, and continuing the law firm theme (in this issue), Christopher O’Connor writes on ‘Knowledge as a Revenue Driver, Not a Cost Centre: the LexisNexis GLP and How to Use Market Intelligence to Make Knowledge a Vital Growth Engine for Law Firms’.

From the academic world, and a colleague of mine at the Squire Law Library in Cambridge, Lizz Edwards-Waller’s article is called, ‘The Mysterious Affair at Squire: Using Code-Breaking Games to Deliver Law Library Skills’. The original backdrop to the conference, had it taken place ‘in-person’ rather than virtually, related to Agatha Christie and was to have occurred in Harrogate; hence the play on the original book title, ‘The Mysterious Affair at Styles’! Alan Wheeler focused on the innovative approach of: ‘Using Lego® Serious Play® in Higher Education with Law Students: Encouraging Playfulness and Creativity within Library Workshops’.

LOCKDOWN & CHALLENGES FOR THE LEGAL INFORMATION WORLD (CONT.)

Finally, and continuing the academic-related theme of the previous two articles, but returning to the challenges of the past year, Peter Kargbo writes about ‘Surviving the Covid-19 Pandemic Lockdown: a Case Study’ with reference to the first national lockdown.

CURRENT AWARENESS

This issue of LIM concludes with the current awareness section provided by Katherine Read and Heather Memess, of the library of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies.

David Wills
Editor