

Alison Napier 1941-2002

Alison Napier, who was well known to many UK legal information professionals, died on 17th December 2002 after a courageous battle against cancer. She remained positive to the end and was taking on new work only a few weeks before she died.

Alison was born in Sydney, but grew up in Melbourne. She was an Anglophile and spent much of her working life in Britain. She first came over here in 1972 and worked for several years as the librarian and information officer at the law firm Norton Rose. Thereafter she travelled back and forth between Australia and Britain, establishing her career in librarianship, as well as pursuing her many other interests.

One of these interests was the catering and hospitality industry. At one time Alison ran a shop and restaurant, which provided lunches for Melbourne's city workers and high-class takeaways for dinner parties. Wherever Alison was, she enjoyed finding delightful eating places and then taking her friends there. She was a great lover of the written word, a member of a writing circle at one time, and had a radio play accepted by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Alison also had a passionate interest and belief in alternative therapies and healthy living. She was a great enthusiast for spreading the word and many of us who knew her ended up sharing that enthusiasm.

Alison returned to the U.K. in 1986 and set herself up as a freelancer, establishing libraries and information centres, creating databases, and constructing thesauri. Initially much of that work was in the legal field, working for firms of solicitors. She was the co-author, together with Christine Miskin, of one of the early editions of the *Legal Information Resources Legal Thesaurus*. Latterly, much of her work was

in that field, as she developed taxonomies for a number of different organisations.

The early 1990's saw Alison settle in Paris for 4 years, working for the OECD amongst other organisations. Alison loved Paris and it was a pleasure to visit her there as she took her visitors to eating places off the tourist route, showed them the sights of Paris and took them to places further afield such as Chartres Cathedral and Giverny.

Alison had a great love of the outdoors. Many of us accompanied her on visits to her beloved Kew Gardens. Another favourite haunt was the Chelsea Physic Garden, which grows medicinal plants. During her last period of time in Australia, Alison was based in Tasmania, where she initially investigated the possibility of growing organic herbs as a business. She then enrolled for a BSc. majoring in Plant Science and completed the foundation year in geology and geography. This was coupled with time spent working for the Tasmanian Herbarium cataloguing the 100 year old collection of pressed specimens belonging to an explorer.

Alison passed on her love of Britain and her interest in the natural world to her daughter, Jenny and son, Michael, whom many of us met as they came to visit their mother. Alison managed to complete her librarianship qualifications in Australia whilst bringing up her children and later completed a BA in French and Philosophy.

Alison was a wonderful friend and trusted colleague, always concerned for the welfare of others. She never failed to delight and surprise her family and friends by her ability to start life afresh in a completely new place. With her variety of interests and her many travels, she made friends the world over, and we are the poorer for her untimely death.

Judith King