

Editorial

This issue focuses on classification and cataloging issues; in particular it addresses questions arising as to the usefulness of the “old fashioned” skills in the present environment for a legal professional. There is little doubt as to the overall conclusion of the contributors but I shall leave readers to discover those views in the articles themselves.

In addition to that theme we have very helpful coverage of certain recruitment and selection issues. In particular Alison Clayton addresses the skills you need to be an effective interviewer and Cath Hancock takes you through the lengthy and sometimes dangerous procedures involved in recruitment and selection.

Recruitment and selection seems a particularly appropriate topic for this issue as it is the last which I shall edit. I am delighted to discover that BIALL has been successful in recruiting Christine Miskin as my successor. Christine is not only my successor but was one of my predecessors as editor of the journal of BIALL under its then title of *The Law Librarian*. I am sure she will bring much greater knowledge of issues relevant to law librarians than I could ever boast and I hope she has as much pleasure from the task as I have had editing the BIALL journal.

The list of people I should thank over those years is very lengthy. I will not attempt to name all but I am sure special mention should be made of Kate Hodgson and Jonathan Gordon-Hill who have chaired the Editorial Board during the majority of that period. All of the people on the Editorial Board have been extremely supportive; and I am grateful to them all. I am also grateful to the many people who have expressed their appreciation of my efforts over the years and their regret at my impending departure. I think I leave the journal in a better state than when I arrived and I am particularly pleased that the dire predictions which were heard from time to time when we considered the change of title to Legal Information Management have proved to be unfounded. I think the new look and more precise focus which we have at last

achieved has a real value for BIALL and that the journal will long continue to be a flagship publication for the Association. It is perhaps particularly apt that I should leave on an issue which has had an embarrassment of contributions. I have not been able to include all the many articles available in this issue, which no doubt my successor will edit and put before you in due course, and that is in part due to the high profile which the journal has maintained. It is also a tribute, I should add, to Cathie Jackson who has been the principle force in recruiting contributors for this issue. That is an even more laudable achievement in that she has fulfilled that role whilst preparing the lengthy survey which graces these pages. I am particularly impressed by her recruitment of Roderick Munday whose wide-ranging article on transcripts entertained and enlightened me – I am glad to leave on an issue which refers to “featureless ocean wastes” and the navigational skills of Pacific islanders.

The biggest lesson I have learnt in my years as Editor is not to underestimate the very considerable skills of legal information professionals. I am not sure whether the notice on my wall which reads “always remember law librarians are cleverer than you are” should be removed now that I have ceased to edit the journal but, if it is, I can think of many people in legal publishing and legal practice who would benefit from taking it from me and affixing it to their wall. The main complaint I would have about legal information professionals in the UK is that too many show excessive deference and fail to assert their considerable skills even when they know that those around them have fewer relevant skills to use in solving the ongoing problems in managing legal information. If, during my time as Editor, the journal has succeeded in encouraging more legal information professionals to value their skills and to make others value them then I can feel satisfied.

I wish the journal and my successor all the very best in the future.

Laurence Eastham