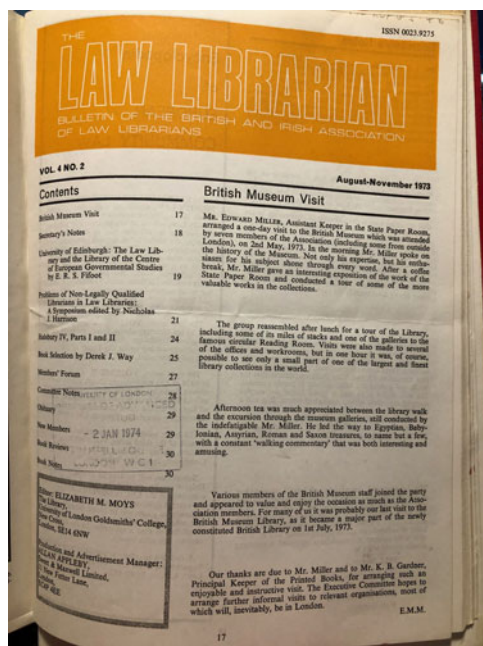


RETROSPECTIVE

Raiders of the Lost Archive

Abstract: In the first in a series of regular articles reviewing archived issues of *Legal Information Management* and *The Law Librarian* – as the journal was once known – the LIM editors examine the issues, and indeed the issues, of 1973.

Keywords: legal publishing; legal journals; law librarianship; legal information management; BIALL



Closer to home, the Lexis computerised legal research service began, while in the pages of *The Law Librarian* (as LIM was known from 1970 to 2000) the first of 1973's three editions carried articles on King's Inns Library, Dublin; The Beginning of Legal Journalism and a Bibliographic Guide to Early British Law Books. This issue, along with all the others in 1973, was edited by Elizabeth Moys – now known for the classification system that bears her name.

One of the surprising aspects of this first delve into the archive was the international nature of *The Law Librarian*. For instance, there's a report on the German Law Librarians Group, which is still active today (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für juristisches Bibliotheks und Dokumentationswesen [Working Group for Law Libraries and Documentation Services] or AjBD). There's also a report on the 65th annual meeting of AALL, which took place in July 1972, while in the book reviews section there's a half page advert for *The Laws of Seychelles*. There are actually quite a few advertisements in this issue, including one carrying the strapline of 'Witchcraft, Duels, Robbery and Murder' (see Figure 1) which certainly grabs your attention.

Legal Information Management (LIM) has been around since 1970, which means pretty much every aspect of legal information technology and practice has been covered at some time or other. With that in mind, in this regular new feature the editors will trawl through the archives for a given year to give a snapshot of the trends, tech developments, points of discussion, controversy, and also those predictions that have come true and those that have not, of LIMs gone by. We will start with the three editions published 50 years ago ...

SMALL BEGINNINGS AND TOWERING ACHIEVEMENTS

In 1973 the Open University awarded its first degrees; Richard Nixon became US President for the second time – his Watergate downfall coming later that same year – the first handheld mobile phone call was made; the 442m Sears Tower in Chicago became the world's tallest building; Luxembourg won the Eurovision Song Contest and Sunderland the FA Cup.

CANTERBURY TALE

One of the most interesting items in the second issue of 1973 was a short paragraph in the Members' Forum on the topic of computers and the law, which stated that "the *Times Higher Education Supplement* for 22 June [1973] reported on a plan by the University of Kent at Canterbury to set up a Unit for Legal Research in Computers and Communications, the first of its kind in Britain ... Their first area of study will be computer programmes for searching legal literature and the second area will be the social consequences of computers, especially in relation to privacy and to theft from computer information stores." It's interesting to note that while computers and technology have moved on somewhat, our profession is still grappling with these very same issues.

There was also an article called Problems of Non-Legally Qualified Librarians in Law Libraries, which was a

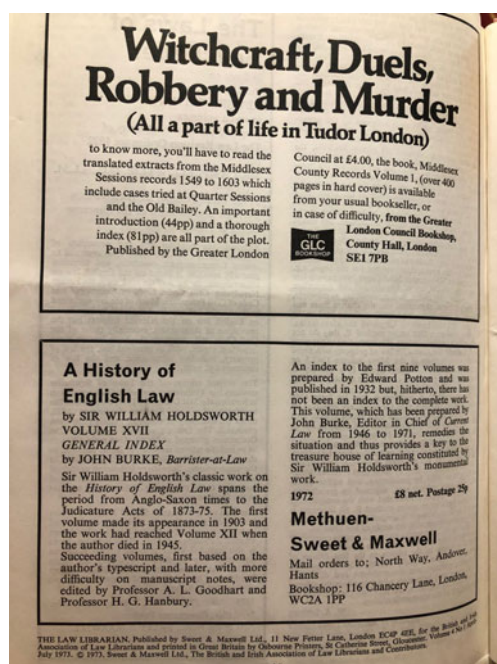


Figure 1: Adverts were a feature of *The Law Librarian* in 1973.

report on a symposium held at Trent Polytechnic (now Nottingham Trent University) outlining the then-current challenges faced by three university law subject librarians. One of the key questions was “that of finance, and the most difficult question is not the quantity of funds but the extent of control that the librarian possesses.” The gist of this being, is it up to the librarian to make spending decisions, or the academic staff? There were also challenges centred on the physical layout of the law library and which classification scheme was in use.

Other articles included a piece on The Law Library and The Library of the Centre of European Governmental Studies at the University of Edinburgh. There’s also an interesting news story in the Secretary’s Notes on the Duplicates Exchange Scheme, saying that it

had 21 members in its first year of operation. Though the Scheme did reach the heady heights of over 100 members at one point, there are currently 34 members – surely a reflection of the changing emphasis on the uses of print materials in law libraries today.

It’s also interesting to note that in these pre-internet days law libraries would often issue requests for books in the Members’ Forum – the precursor to the BIALL Mailing List in many ways. For example: The Middle Temple Library was looking for *Selected Judgments of the West African Court of Appeals, Volume 16, 1955/60: Sierra Leone and Gambia*.

THE MISSING HAGGIS

The third and final edition of 1973 contained two articles on the United Nations law libraries: the first a profile of the legal section of the United Nations Geneva Library, the second a paper on the use of UN documentation for international law research and teaching.

Elsewhere in the journal, a report on the Association’s fourth annual conference, held at the University of Edinburgh in September 1973, summed up the event thus: “The whole Conference had been most competently and successfully organised by Mr Ballantyne and, though the haggis promised in the preliminary notice in *The Law Librarian* did not materialise, we ate, drank (largely at publishers’ expense) and slept very well, as well as enjoying a variety of excellent papers.”

Meanwhile, IALL, the International Association of Law Libraries, gave an insight into its workings, its history, and its vision for the future. It saw the future of law librarianship as: “Today, the demands on the law library profession are rapidly increasing everywhere. To measure up to this situation, librarians all over the world are moving closer to each other in national and regional groups and trying to solve their mounting problems together.” The same could probably have been said of BIALL then, as well, and certainly of BIALL now.