

# Editorial

## BIALL: 50 YEARS

This year, 2019, sees the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL) reach a landmark birthday; 50 years! As Don Daintree (BIALL Chair from 1969 to 1975) declared after a First Workshop on Law Librarianship held in Harrogate in February 1968, ‘*Maybe it was the feeling of camaraderie, built up around a roaring open fire in the hotel as the snow lay thick and freezing outside, that acted as a stimulus but, while it no doubt contributed, it was more obviously the need felt for an organisation to represent their interests that led this group of some two dozen people to appoint a steering committee*’ to examine the feasibility of establishing an association of law librarians<sup>1</sup>. In 1969, a Second Workshop saw the launch of the Association and at its first AGM on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1969, with 34 people present, the name, British and Irish Association of Law Librarians, was confirmed. As Mary Blake mentioned in her history of the Association,

*It is interesting to note that most other national associations are of Law Libraries whereas BIALl is an association of Law Librarians, thereby emphasising the original intent of the founders that the Association should be open to all persons interested in law librarianship.*<sup>2</sup>

For me, the emphasis on law librarians is significant. It has been the people, the personalities, the experts in our business, who have characterised BIALl over 50 years and that spirit continues as will be evident again at the annual conference that takes place in Bournemouth later this year. And of course, as an Association, we encompass all areas of our business from law librarianship, legal information management, knowledge management, legal technology to legal publishing and more.

While this journal has an extra year to go before it reaches the same birthday (having been launched in 1970), in the next issue (volume 19(2)) we will publish a number of articles about BIALl and law librarianship to mark the Association’s half century of achievement. For now, we turn to the content of the first issue of LIM for this year which contains a mixture of lengthier than usual articles and some shorter pieces too.

## FEATURE ARTICLE

We start with an academic piece written by Ronald Yu and Gabriele Spina Ali who address the topical subject of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Their paper examines how AI will re-define legal research in both the private sector as well as in the world of academia. The authors look at some of the factors that can jeopardize the reliability of

AI-assisted legal research. They also assess some of the solutions to mitigate this situation.

## OCCASIONAL SERIES

In this series, Lesley Dingle returns with an article detailing her conversations with James Crawford who, after 23 years as a senior academic public international lawyer in Cambridge, was elected to the bench of the International Court of Justice in 2015. Her conversations with Judge Crawford represent her latest entry in the Eminent Scholars Archive, the project that Lesley Dingle founded and developed herself.

## FOCUS ON LEGAL PUBLISHERS AND SUPPLIERS

BIALL is not the only organisation to reach a landmark age. In 2018, LexisNexis arrived at 200 years! James Harper, traces the history of LexisNexis and its development from Butterworths as it evolved innovatively as one of the leading legal publishing and technology companies.

## CURRENT INTERESTS AND SHORTER ARTICLES

Under *Current Interests*, there are three articles. Firstly, Anne Binsfeld writes about the information literacy challenges for new barristers as they make the transition from education to the workplace. Jill Henderson and Louise Young contribute an article based on their ‘lightning talk’ at the 2018 BIALl Conference entitled, *Cutting Through the Noise: Revamping Current Awareness at Irwin Mitchell*. Finally, Kate Faulkner marks the centenary of the Representation of the People Act 1918 and the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 with a piece about the significant moments in the journey of women as they entered into the legal profession taking a perspective from the University of Cambridge. Under *Shorter Articles*, Matthew Terrell and David Hand of Justis Publishing reveal the overall winner and the winners in each category for the Justis International Writing Competition 2019 with each of the short articles included following their introduction.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**David Wills**  
Editor

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Don Daintree, (1970) Welcome. *Law Librarian* 1(1), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Blake, *A History of The British and Irish Association of Law Librarians 1969–1999*. (BIALL), 7.