

Editorial

Welcome to the Spring 2021 issue of *Legal Information Management*. One year ago, in March 2020, a national lockdown began in the UK and Ireland. At the time of writing this editorial, with the vaccination programme having got underway, there appears to be some light at the end of a very long, dark tunnel. The UK government has even suggested that, assuming progress continues in a positive direction, after the 21 June 2021 life could return to some level of normality – with legal limits on social contact removed. Time will tell. Nevertheless, despite this optimism, Covid-19 is never far from our minds. In our legal information world we wait to see just what the ‘new normal’ will look like in our professional life, and what ‘recovery’ of our services will mean in real terms. I tend to view things from the perspective of higher education – the sector about which I am most familiar. With regard to the next academic year, 2021–2022, there may be some hope for a more normal educational year ahead with students being present, more teaching taking place ‘in-person’ and libraries physically open to its readers with increased occupancy levels – albeit with social distance protocols and other measures probably remaining in place for some considerable time to come. The longer term picture still remains unclear and with renewed lockdowns being imposed in many countries in Europe, and beyond, in the lead-up to Easter there is still considerable uncertainty.

It is difficult to ignore Covid-19 at this time and the effects on our working life. This issue of LIM begins by looking back to May 2020 and BIALL’s Covid-19 industry survey.

BIALL COVID-19 INDUSTRY SURVEY

BIALL carried out a survey of BIALL members in May 2020, in order to get a sense of the impact of the pandemic at that point in time. The survey was a snapshot of respondents’ feelings at a stage when perhaps many people expected that the end of the worst of the pandemic was in sight. By the latter part of the summer, and with the onset of a second wave, that was clearly not the case. Karen Brown, BIALL’s President, provides an introduction to the survey and then, in the pages that follow, the results are made accessible to LIM readers.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Our feature article is written by Margaret Clay who retired in 2020, and she looks back on her long tenure as Librarian at the Inner Temple overseeing one of the four Inns of Court libraries. She takes us on a journey through

her thirty years of experience, notes the many changes that have taken place over that time and outlines some of the challenges of the role. Many congratulations to Margaret on her very well-deserved retirement!

FOCUS ON LEGAL PUBLISHERS AND SUPPLIERS

This time, this regular feature focuses on Gale, a Cengage company and one of their key products, the *Making of Modern Law*. Bennett Graff, senior acquisitions editor at Gale, reviews the origins and current composition of the legal history database. His overview explores the rationale behind the development of the collections and the research needs that they meet.

CURRENT INTERESTS

The current interests section has two articles. Firstly, Vanessa Curley and Sarah Foley, both of the Bar of Ireland Law Library, write in celebration of a century of women in the law, using historical exhibitions to enhance user engagement and promote a library service. Then there is an article written by Beth Flerlage and Renae Satterley, from Middle Temple Library, giving their experience on the use of Agile project management and related tools used for book moves.

PRODUCT REVIEW

Lenka Geidt, also of Middle Temple, provides a product review for both the Kluwer Arbitration and Competition Law modules, by the publisher Wolters Kluwer - services that have recently been taken by her library.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Editor