

Sir William Dale Centre for Legislative Studies

Course in legislative drafting due to start on 1 May 2002

The next course in legislative drafting is to be held from Wednesday 1 May – Friday 5 July 2002, and will draw expertise from a pool of serving and retired public figures of international standing among whom are senior professional drafters, practising lawyers, and academics who are also members of the centre's Advisory Committee.


The course will be spread over a period of 10 weeks, and taught in weekly lectures and tutorials. It is divided into two parts: part I presents core teaching on drafting techniques and is recommended to both experienced and inexperienced drafters, while part II offers participants the opportunity to apply these techniques in a number of areas of particular difficulty (such as the drafting of penal and taxation legislation, and international agreements). If sufficient interest is shown in the topic, the course may also include brief tuition on drafting EU legal texts and on the difficulties concerning the transposition of EU texts into the national laws of EU Member States and accession countries.

Participants will have the opportunity to be taken to institutions of significance and relevance to aspects of the programme, such as the Houses of Parliament and the law courts. All participants will have free and full use of the IALS library, which has one of the most extensive holdings of books, manuscripts, research papers and documents published in EU, the Commonwealth and beyond.

Upon completion of the course, participants will be awarded a Certificate of Attendance in Legislative Drafting

from the IALS (University of London). Students whose performance in the lectures and exercises demonstrates proficiency in drafting may be permitted to proceed to the post-graduate research degrees of M.Phil and Ph.D in Legislative Drafting offered under the auspices of the IALS and the University of London.

The course in legislative drafting was first offered in 1964 under the name of the 'Government legal advisers' course', and since then has been attended by more than 600 legal officials from 60 countries from inside and outside the Commonwealth. The late Sir William Dale, who was director of Studies of the Government legal advisers' course for over 25 years, left the legacy that comparative drafting style analysis is beneficial to both common and civil law lawyers alike. This approach continues to be a guiding principle for the course, which since 1998 has been offered under the centre that bears his name.

Further information about the centre and the course can be accessed via the IALS website (<http://ials.sas.ac.uk>). The site includes the course syllabus and the application form, which can be downloaded and printed for use. Those who would to discuss their application informally with the centre's Academic Director, Dr Helen Xanthaki, can contact her directly (email: Helen.Xanthaki@sas.ac.uk; telephone +44 (0) 20 7862 5861). 

Library News

What US law libraries have to offer

Paul Norman spent time at the New York University Law School Library earlier this year, and also visited a number of America's other leading law libraries. He passes on his impressions of how libraries have been renovated, new technology accommodated, and user services and practices developed.

At the end of March 2001 I had the privilege of spending three weeks as the guest of New York University Law School Library and its Librarian M. Kathleen (Kathie) Price. The Library is the centre, and Kathie the driving force, of the legal Information Transfer Network (ITN). This is a project funded by the Starr Foundation, and aimed at providing a global network of

law libraries which would offer 24-hour reference service, both to its own members and to the academic legal community in the developing world.

NYU Law School already has an extensive 'Global Law School' program, which brings distinguished scholars and students from around the world each year. Twenty faculty

and 200 students from over 30 countries make NYU a truly international law school, where participants can be immersed in teaching and discussion of each others' legal systems. ITN complements this endeavour.

The initial stage for ITN was to set up a partnership with major university law libraries across the world. The list currently includes the University of Washington in Seattle, Toronto Canada, Melbourne Australia, Cape Town South Africa, Yerevan Armenia, Leuven Belgium, Tilburg Netherlands, Tsinghua China, and IALS in the UK. The University of Konstanz, Germany has recently joined the group. While at NYU I met Liying Yu of Tsinghua, who was on a long-term Starr internship, and Amanda Barratt of Cape Town, who managed to join us for a few days. I took the opportunity during my stay of visiting several other law libraries, including a day each at Yale and Harvard, and of attending a meeting of international law librarians at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of International Law in Washington DC.

New York University Law Library is set within the Law School building of Vanderbilt Hall, on the south side of Washington Square in New York City. The main reading room, though built in the 1960s, is reminiscent of many British libraries in the classical manner, with elegant columns and rows of side bays. But nowadays its shelves are devoted only to volumes of national and New York law reports and statutes required for initial teaching of legal research, and to ranks of computers dedicated to legal databases. The heart of the library is now two levels down, reached by a more recent (1980s) grand double staircase overlooking a spacious galleried atrium forming a second reading room. A busy reference desk staffed by two reference librarians stands centrally under the stairs. Senior reference librarians can also be consulted in their offices nearby.

To one side of the reference desk is a circulation desk where material is issued by non-professional staff from a small course reserves collection and the nearby, much larger, general reserve collection of in-demand materials. This would fill about half of one of IALS library's main reading rooms, and includes most current periodical parts.

There is provision for connecting laptop computers throughout the library, and most single desks around the perimeter of the book stack areas have a PC, sometimes to the annoyance of students who just want to spread out their books. As well as a computer lab, there is a computer training room used by both Lexis and Westlaw for teaching use of their databases. Both companies have a representative on duty on most days. Amanda and I had the opportunity to attend training sessions at the downtown offices of each company.

During my visit the access to part of the library lying under the road outside was being blocked off, as the Law School is about to build a massive 6-storey extension across the road. This had already entailed giving the media

centre (microforms and videos) a temporary home in the main stacks. More alarming is the prospect of the library becoming a noisy access route between the two parts of the Law School.

I spent some time at the reference desk, and managed to answer one or two questions, but many were caused by the complications of being half way through re-classifying the collection to the Library of Congress scheme. This is made more confusing since NYU had its own version of class K (law), and all stock not re-classified had to have 'NYU LAW' added on the spine.

Most of the libraries I visited have undergone, or are currently suffering, this painful process. More interestingly though, most had also had major renovation, or moved into new premises in recent years. All have found ways of accommodating new technology, particularly the use of personal computers and laptops. George Washington University in Washington DC provides ingenious glass-topped desks with PC monitors visible at an angle below: a useful dual function, provided that light reflection problems can be solved! A bold step was to take all the book stock out of a large reading room and create a 'great room' for quiet study. But what impressed me most here was the audio-visual service, as well equipped as a television company, with capability of playing, recording and relaying lectures and seminars. Tapes were even supplied to sick students who could not attend a lecture.

Fordham in New York City has kept its large reading room, now enhanced by space age Aeron chairs (\$700 each!). Circulation and reference desks face each other in a redesigned entrance area which minimises disturbance to the reading room beyond. There are new seminar rooms at balcony level and a new computer lab concealed and soundproofed behind frosted glass. There is also a computer training lab with PCs in a novel 'musical chairs' arrangement, which leaves plenty of wall space for whiteboards, posters and instructions and retains the seminar atmosphere with students facing each other.

Georgetown University, also in Washington DC, has a completely new Law School library, but this again includes a traditional large, high ceiling, wood-panelled reading room with circulation and reference desks. At Georgetown the old is also as important as the new in collection building. I was shown the recently acquired private library of Lord Eldon, including valuable personal papers.

The law library at Columbia University, again in New York, has a generally utilitarian feel, unlike its old home in Kent Hall which now houses the oriental library. However, it has refurbished its entrance, reference and circulation areas to advantage, and its special Toshiba Collection of Japanese Law is opulently housed. As in NYU, there is a mixture of classification schemes, local and Library of Congress, though here I suspect the older stock will be left with its current numbers.

A feature I hadn't seen before was allocated shelving, to be used by readers who need a collection of materials from day to day. Books are actually issued on the computer to a certain shelf in a particular reader's name. The most spectacular innovation is the area just outside the library, including the Drapkin Lounge with views across the campus, but more importantly, power and network outlets. Students can use electronic resources without being in the library, but are close enough to use it if the need arises.

The biggest renovation projects have been at Yale and Harvard. The Yale scheme started in late 1995 and was completed in 1999. All seats in the library, including those in the impressive traditional reading room, now have power and network connections. New carrels similarly equipped are ranged in gallery stack areas formerly not open to readers, but with pleasing views down on the reading room below. Library staff areas, although in the basement, are generally open-plan but with a good feeling of personal space.

Harvard has had the most thorough renovation project, lasting an astonishingly short 14 months in 1996/97 and costing \$35 million. The scale of Langdell Hall puts even other American law libraries in the shade, as the law library now fills the entire building. The main reading room, bisected by a monumental Doric colonnade, fills almost the entire 500-foot long fourth floor of the building. Any description can only hint at the magnificence of the surroundings. The Areeda building, which joins Langdell centrally at right-angles, houses the spacious new reference department, with senior library staff offices on a gallery above. From reference, there is a new bridge link to the separate International Legal Studies Library in the Lewis International Law Center.

Like Yale, this part of the library has its own reference and circulation desks. Modern technology was an integral part of the refurbishment. Over 800 of a possible 1,100 network connections have been activated, and there are over 500 data ports at tables, carrels, lounges and study rooms. There is also a new 24-workstation computer lab and two 6-station training labs. Not neglecting the historical interest, I was shown the rare book collection, as well as a substantial art collection.

In Washington, there was a lunch-time meeting of foreign and international law librarians on 'Fostering an international legal information network', at which various delegates described current electronic projects and programs, many of them including WEB guides to international legal research. Kathie described ITN, and I had a chance to describe the SOSIG internet law gateway, which is edited at IALS. I also, perhaps imprudently, raised the hope that some way may be found of reviving Bowman & Harris, the indispensable guide to multilateral treaties. When the applause had died down, I had to emphasise that this was a hope and not a promise.

As well as the universities in Washington, I had brief visits to the legal library at the IMF, and the Supreme

Court Library ('many people don't realise we have one') housed in grand surroundings above the courtroom, but just as up to date with technology as its neighbours. There were four reference desks to serve both the justices and the Supreme Court Bar.

Of course I could not leave out the Law Library of Congress, housed in the modern Madison Building which stands adjacent to the awe-inspiring original Jefferson Building. I sat in on a discussion with local law librarians on international law collection issues, held in a committee room in Jefferson, and we were shown not only the grand hall (reminiscent of the Baptismal Staircase in the Hermitage), but in particular the splendid exhibition of Thomas Jefferson's library, including signs of damage when the British burned the White House.

Having as its prime function the provision of information to the Congress, much of the day-to-day work of the Law Library of Congress is to undertake research and supply reports to Representatives, Senators and the Federal Government, but there is also a reading room open to the public, so that the Library combines functions which in the UK would include the libraries of the two Houses of Parliament, the House of Commons Information Office and the British Library.

I had a fascinating tour of the stack areas, including very serviceable hand-cranked mobile shelving and its ailing electrically operated successors. I was intrigued to hear of occasions when the chief librarian was summoned to 'come and look what we found!', but then this is probably to be expected in such a large library with constant intake of materials from all parts of the world. Even IALS has had one or two long-term uncatalogued collections!

Among the many welcoming librarians at LC, I was honoured to meet Marie Louise Bernal, special assistant to the law librarian, who hosted my visit, and Jolande Goldberg, award-winning compiler of several parts of the Library of Congress law classification schedules. Ms Goldberg has most recently been working on schedules for religious legal systems. She is one of the many distinguished scholars who have brought European expertise to American law librarianship. But she also finds time to operate an art studio in nearby Alexandria, Va., where she creates elegant garden sculptures.

So what were the lasting impressions? To some extent there was a novelty in seeing libraries that had a large, diverse and yet unified constituency, i.e. the one law school of the respective university. Some of the services and practices could not very easily be applied to a library such as ours at IALS.

There is much more active service provision for faculty members than we are used to, including not only simple but labour-intensive technical operations like delivering in-house library loans, inter-library loans and photocopies to staff offices, but a great deal of liaison work. Librarians are specifically assigned to a group of faculty who discuss and

where possible meet their research need. This often includes, for instance, contributions by librarians to research methods seminars. Given that the IALS faculty can be counted in single figures rather than scores, I think there may be some scope for improved services in that direction.

I was surprised at how few doctoral students there were at most law schools I visited. It appeared that such studies are usually a preliminary to a career in law teaching.


To a large extent, research assistants are a much more identifiable group than the small number we encounter at IALS. It is they who do the spade-work of legal research in the sense of document-gathering for faculty, and it is they who receive advice and instruction from the reference librarians. At Harvard, the Library even provides a 'research assistants for hire' scheme. Another identifiably demanding group are students working for the local law school journal, whether as authors or again as research assistants. Sometimes special rooms are allocated to them.

All the libraries I visited had well developed electronic resources, often comparable to what we are offering at IALS. There were similar mixtures of networked and stand-alone CD-ROM services and web based resources, NYU being the only one I saw that had completely abandoned CD-ROMs (several others said they would if they could). Similarly, there were occasionally services shared with the main university library. However, at least

some law libraries had experienced gradually diminishing relationships with their university libraries in recent years.

Many libraries had extensive web sites with pages offering guides to legal research (NYU among the most developed). The use of laptops is increasing at the expense of PCs, sometimes to the extent of requiring students to own or rent one. I think it may take a few more years before we reach that situation in the UK.

No one however is discarding non-electronic resources, as there is uncertainty about the guaranteed future of specific types of electronic media (how long will you be able to access that CD-ROM issued only in 1997?). Archive material has often been acquired in, or transferred to microfiche, which is seen as a stable medium for long-term retention. All the libraries, especially the largest, rely on off-site storage. This something for which we at IALS have an ever more urgent need.

I greatly enjoyed my brief visit, and the kind welcome I received from all the librarians I met. I am particularly grateful to Kathie Price, who not only arranged the visit, but generously allowed me to stay at her home in Alexandria, and did her very best (unsuccessfully as it turned out) to help me join the bellringers at the National Cathedral on Palm Sunday morning. 

Paul Norman

Reference and On-line services Librarian, IALS

SALS Seminars and Conference

For the latest information on these and other events, including any late cancellations, please consult the Society for Advanced Legal Studies website. This can be reached through the IALS website (<http://ials.sas.ac.uk>).

Thursday, 17 January, 6pm 2002

CHARLES HARPUM

Falcon Chambers and former Law Commissioner
The conveyancing revolution; buying property electronically

CHAIR: HER HONOUR JUDGE DIANA FABER

Thursday, 24 January, 6pm

LAURENCE OATES

Official Solicitor
The courts' role in life and death decisions

CHAIR: THE RT HON JUSTICE BUTLER-SLOSS

President, Family Law Division

Thursday, 31 January, 6pm

Women in Law: Joint Society for Advanced Legal Studies and Women's Interest Group of the International Bar Association Lectures

LESLEY MCDONAGH

Managing partner, Lovells
Managing a large law firm

CHAIR: MS CLAIRE MISKIN

3 Dr Johnson's Buildings and Co-Chair, Women's Interest Group of the IBA

Thursday, 21 February, 6pm

GEOFFREY BINDMAN

Bindman & Partners
Shifting the balance of power: civil liberties and access to justice in the 21st century

Thursday, 28 February, 6pm

Women in Law: Joint Society for Advanced Legal Studies and Women's Interest Group of the International Bar Association Lectures

MARGARET BENNETT

Margaret Bennett, solicitors
The recognition and enforcement in England and Wales of foreign family judgments

CHAIR: LINDA PACKARD

Director, Phoenix Global Research Ltd and Co-Chair, Womens' Interest Group of the IBA