Legal Information Management, 19 (2019), pp. 118–121
© The Author(s) 2019. Published by British and Irish Association of Law Librarians
doi:10.1017/S1472669619000306

BIALL and the Wider World

Abstract: In this article Loyita Worley describes the relationships between the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL) and its fellow organisations around the world. She looks at the way that BIALL has promoted law librarianship internationally and mentions some of the activities of the Association including its recent project work in Sierra Leone, as well as noting a few reminiscences along the way.
Keywords: law librarianship; professional bodies; BIALL

INTRODUCTION

When I was asked to write this article – presumably for the reason that I have been involved with BIALL for a long time and over the years that has included attending various overseas conferences and helping to organise two Joint Study Institutes – I was not quite sure where it would lead. So, I started with Mary Blakes's '*History of BIALL 1969–1999*'[1] and then contacted friends and colleagues around the world for their knowledge and recollections. All responded quickly and enthusiastically and whilst some are now retired, all remembered their times with BIALL with great affection and fondness and provided as much material as they were able. This reminded me how lucky I have been in my career to have had the opportunity to work with so many talented and supportive people.

The foundation of BIALL in 1969 was preceded by the establishment of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) in 1906, the International Association of Law Libraries (IALL) in 1959 and the Canadian Association of Law Libraries/Association Canadienne des Bibliothèques de Droit (CALL/ACBD) in 1963. The Australian Law Librarians' Association (ALLA) was formed in 1969 although it was then known as the Australian Law Librarians' Group (ALLG) and finally the New Zealand Law Librarians Association (NZLLA) emerged in 1977. Of course there are other international groups of law libraries and librarians and we will come across some of these at different points.

BIALL'S ORIGINS

BIALL's origins lie in a workshop for those working with legal materials that took place in Harrogate in 1968. At the end of that, the attendees resolved to set up a British section of IALL and Derek Way who was then the sub-librarian in Liverpool University's Faculty of Law, was elected to an ad hoc committee to look into this, together with Wallace Breem (Inner Temple), Betty Moys (Glasgow University), Willi Steiner (Squire Law Library) and Don Daintree (Leeds College). By the following year when the next workshop was held, work had begun in earnest to set up the proposed association which emerged as the independent body which we know as BIALL. The then President of AALL, William B Stern, sent a telegram of good wishes to the new association on the occasion of its first AGM as did IALL and the Netherlands Law Librarians Group.

In 1970 the Executive Committee included in its agenda for the October meeting 'To consider the policy of the Association as regards representation upon other bodies with allied interests, the submission of memoranda in lieu thereof, and representation at international conferences'. News of BIALL activities spread abroad through the *The Law Librarian* (the precursor of *Legal Information Management*) and personal contacts with law librarians and publishers. The Association soon acquired some overseas members and the first overseas delegate to a BIALL conference that I can trace was Marlene McGuirl, Head of the American-British Law Division of the Library of Congress, who attended the 1971 (Southampton) conference and several others.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The relationship between BIALL and its fellow organisations grew steadily and my involvement started in 1985 shortly after I joined the Association.

It is interesting to note here that most other national associations are of law *libraries* whereas BIALL is an association of law *librarians*. This was a deliberate decision of the founders that the Association should be open to all persons interested in law librarianship.

AALL

The relationship between BIALL and AALL was a close one from the beginning. Further collaboration was sought but in the early days the difference in size between the two organisations caused some administrative challenges. David Thomas, then Professor of Law at Brigham Young University became the informal representative of AALL and started attending BIALL meetings from about 1981. He did much to strengthen ties between our two organisations and felt that the relationship was beneficial and

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1472669619000306 Published online by Cambridge University Press

productive for both. During this time there was a dramatic increase in visits and exchanges, and other professional contacts were made. After some years, the AALL leadership determined that the AALL President should attend the BIALL conference as their representative instead and this took effect from 1989.

The idea of an AALL/BIALL exchange programme had been promoted during the 1970s and early 80s. A request was made at the Toronto AALL meeting in 1977 that the AALL Executive Board create a special committee to work out the details of an exchange programme between AALL and BIALL. BIALL suggested both short and long term exchanges depending on what arrangements could be made to equalise the salary differentials between American and overseas librarians. It was decided that these and other details could be worked out by an AALL Committee and representatives of BIALL. On BIALL's part, it was decided that whilst BIALL couldn't be responsible for any detailed arrangements, they were happy to cooperate with AALL in a programme for putting interested parties in touch with each other.

The result of AALL's policy decision concerning representation at overseas and special organisations was that BIALL looked into this too and the subsequent report was sent to the presidents of both AALL and CALL. Further action was taken by the appointment of an Overseas Information Officer and the formation of a Standing Committee on Overseas Representation to advise and assist.

AALL SUMMER INSTITUTE, OXFORD, 1986

David Thomas' continued interest in international relationships and attendance at BIALL conferences, led to him organising an AALL summer institute in Oxford in 1986. BIALL was invited to provide some speakers for the programme which covered aspects of the British legal system, bibliography and law librarianship. I attended that institute as a delegate and was there approached by a US librarian to do a job exchange. We overcame a number of challenges to get this approved by our employers and in the summer of 1987 I spent three months working at Hastings College of the Law Library in San Francisco while my counterpart worked at the Law Society Library in London. The exchange proved very successful on both sides and through it I met many US law librarians and my own interest in international relations between law librarians was born.

This meeting was a precursor to the Joint Study Institutes which followed later.

AALL CONVENTIONS

The AALL conferences were huge compared to BIALL and attendees recollect not knowing anyone and being faced with many choices of parallel sessions, both aspects being rather daunting. It was Carol Billings, during her presidential year 1994–1995, who increased the care taken of overseas visitors in an informal way. Around 2001–2002 she suggested to the leadership of AALL that they should establish a formal programme for welcoming their foreign attendees. As a result she ended up chairing a Special Committee for Hospitality for Visitors from Abroad where they assigned informal hosts to registrants from other countries – most often BIALL. This was also the beginning of AALL's Foreign, Comparative & International Law (FICL) group hosting a reception at each annual meeting to welcome those from abroad, a fixture which still continues today.

JOINT STUDY INSTITUTES (JSI)

The idea for some sort of joint meeting had been discussed between AALL and BIALL as far back as 1975 and whilst practicalities intervened, the idea was always there. Representatives of AALL, CALL and BIALL met informally in May 1995 at the CALL conference in Regina to discuss the potential for closer contacts between the three associations. A rolling programme of biennial study institutes was proposed with each association taking it in turns to host the event. BIALL was to have the honour of hosting the first Institute, with AALL arranging the second and CALL arranging the third. One major and innovative decision was that the internet should serve as the principal method of dissemination of information for the first Joint Study Institute (JSI) and, if possible, should even provide the means for intending delegates to register. What a long way away that seems now! The purpose of the JSI was 'to provide a focus through an educational event for members of the three associations to meet in one country and for the guests to learn about the law and legal information provision in the host country'.

The first Joint Study Institute took place in Cambridge in 1998 immediately before the BIALL conference in Portsmouth. That was before BIALL employed conference organisers and the Chair was actively involved in the planning and arrangements for both events. I was the Chair that year and remember it well.

There were 70 attendees at the first JSI. 47% of the delegates came from the US, 38% from the UK and the Republic of Ireland and 10% from Canada. One Danish and two Australian delegates also attended. The final session of the JSI took the form of a panel where all the associations were represented. There was unanimous agreement that the Cambridge JSI had been extremely successful and that the subsequent US JSI should go ahead. At that point, Australia and then later New Zealand asked to be included too.

Subsequent JSIs took place at Yale Law School, Vancouver Island and the Women's College Sydney. The second JSI hosted by BIALL took place at St Anne's College Oxford in 2006. That was followed by JSIs at Georgetown University Washington DC, Montreal and then finally Melbourne in 2013. By that time finding the funding for travel was becoming increasingly difficult

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1472669619000306 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and numbers were dwindling, so the idea was put on hold.

PUBLISHER PARTICIPATION

Publishers have always played an important part in BIALL's history and 1974 saw American companies attend a BIALL conference for the first time, namely Oceana and West. Over the years they have provided funding to facilitate attendance at overseas conferences. Oceana supported eleven members of BIALL to go to the AALL New York meeting in 1985. Sweet & Maxwell /Carswell offered a reciprocal arrangement to finance attendance for one BIALL member at the CALL conference and one CALL member at the BIALL conference on an ongoing basis. In 1991 Butterworths offered a similar arrangement which enabled BIALL and the ALLG to send a delegate to each other's conferences. Betty Moys was the first recipient of this for BIALL when she attended the Australian conference in Canberra. This sponsorship was instrumental in helping to develop the strong but informal relationship between the organisations.

Changes to the BIALL committee structure in 1992 resulted in the Standing Committee on Overseas Representation becoming the Standing Committee on External Affairs (SCEA). Through this, BIALL representation grew again in 1994 when we exchanged conference delegates with the Organisation of South Africa Law Libraries (OSALL). In 1996 we added the New Zealand Law Libraries Group (NZLLG) to our representation. Contacts were also established with the Commonwealth Association of Law Libraries, a Swiss law library organisation and Kluwer sponsored a French librarian to attend the 1998 BIALL conference for the first time.

CALL

Christine Miskin was the first BIALL attendee at a CALL conference when she went to the conference in Victoria at the University of British Columbia in 1982 and gave a day's pre-conference seminar on sources of English law. It was at CALL's Vancouver conference in 1990 that the presidents of CALL, AALL and BIALL met together for the first time. The Joint Study Institutes are no doubt the best known result of these meetings, but other benefits include sharing information about challenges and new initiatives involving the sister organisations. An important milestone in CALL's relationship with BIALL, one that has benefitted many members, was the reciprocal agreement to offer member rates at conferences to each other's members. The associations that were party to the agreement were AALL, BIALL, IALL and SLA Legal Division. These came into effect in 2000.

IALL

The meeting responsible for the emergence of IALL was held in the Association of the Bar of the City of New York on 24 June 1959 and had an attendance of approximately 60 people. Howard Drake, the then Secretary and Librarian of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, gave the main address. He spoke on 'some of the constructive things an international association of law libraries may do' and stressed the numerous areas in which the work of the Association may be useful and needed. Many members of IALL became members of BIALL too. In 1973 IALL requested that a BIALL member be appointed to liaise between the two associations and, as Willi Steiner was a member of both, it was agreed that he should act as a link. The two associations have worked together ever since.

CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION OF LAW LIBRARIES (CARALL)

The Caribbean Association of Law Libraries was first discussed in 1982 and launched in Trinidad on 3 May 1984. It represents law libraries and law librarians in the English speaking Caribbean. One of their early objectives was to seek affiliation with other law library associations and they approached BIALL in July that year to that end. As a result, minutes of meetings were shared between the associations for many years. Their acronym was originally C.A.L.L. but was changed to CARALL in 1985 to avoid confusion with the Canadian Association of Law Libraries.

COMMONWEALTH ASSOCATION OF LAW LIBRARIANS (COMALL)

There were attempts to launch a Commonwealth Association of Law Librarians during the 1980s. This was instigated by Don Raistrick who was then Head of Library Services at the Lord Chancellor's Department and an active member of BIALL. Don contacted over 200 people and had at least 70 replies expressing interest in the formation of an association for law librarians with an interest in Commonwealth law. It was suggested that the ComALL might perform a valuable task if, in addition to concerning itself with the supply of legal materials to developing countries in the Commonwealth, it also designed short, simplified courses to support efforts being made by Bar associations and law societies to strengthen continuing legal education within their jurisdictions. A journal was proposed, *The Commonwealth Law Librarian,* to be published quarterly to act as a forum for law librarians and legal information specialists throughout the Commonwealth. It would appear however that only two issues of the journal were published and the association never truly got off the ground.

EUROPE

Unsurprisingly there have been some efforts to form European law library associations over the years and

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1472669619000306 Published online by Cambridge University Press

whilst discussions and some visits have taken place no formal bodies were ever formed. A course jointly run by BIALL and The Library Association was organised by Robert Logan in March 1979 on 'International and European Legal Documentation'. This was supported by BIALL's Standing Committee on Education and Training (SCET). Barbara Tearle recalls BIALL's first overseas event to the EEC in Brussels in June 1981. Fourteen BIALL members went on the trip which included demonstrations of CIRCE and CELEX.

One of our members, John Jeffries, worked for some years at the University of Kent, specialising in law librarianship and running a European Documentation Centre (EDC). He was a founder member and driver behind the establishment of the Association of EDC librarians in 1981, which later became the European Information Association and which sadly ceased existence at the end of 2012.

EUROPEAN BUREAU OF LIBRARY, DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION ASSOCIATIONS (EBLIDA)

BIALL was a member of EBLIDA from its inception in 1992. Jules Winterton, then Chair of the Standing Committee on External Affairs (SCEA) was the first BIALL representative for membership purposes and remained the BIALL person involved with it. Membership involved a fee and most of the members were national associations rather than specialist associations like BIALL. In due course the fee became a matter of concern and it was decided to discontinue our membership in 1997.

SIERRA LEONE

BIALL's international relations have not been restricted to working with other law library associations and over the years various interactions have taken place in support of law library projects around the world. A recent example was to offer assistance with law library services in Freetown, Sierra Leone. In September 2013, BIALL was contacted by Richard Honey who represented the Bar Council Sierra Leone Special Interest Group, with a request for BIALL to become involved with a pro bono project. Working with other professional organisations who were already providing training and support in their specific areas of expertise, BIALL was asked to assist with advice and consultation on the management of law library facilities in several institutions in Sierra Leone. BIALL Council agreed to follow and support the project for the coming year which resulted in two BIALL members being externally funded to travel to Freetown in 2014 to provide hands-on training and assessments of the library services at several legal institutions, to include the Sierra Leone Law School in Freetown, the High Court and two universities amongst others. A second visit was paid in 2017 when further valuable work was carried out.

STORIES AND CONCLUSION

Research for this article has thrown up some interesting stories. Barbara Tearle attended her first CALL conference in Jasper in 1988 and was telephoned (by arrangement) and offered the job as Librarian at the Bodleian Law Library which she promptly accepted - and at the CALL conference at Banff in 1999 one of our BIALL members got chased by an elk! As president of CALL John Eaton attended the 2001 BIALL conference in Cork and the 2002 conference in Liverpool. At the latter he experienced one of the highlights of his life – playing drums on 'From Me to You' with the (fake) Beatles at the conference banquet – an opportunity which had been secretly arranged as a surprise. I am sure that there are many other stories that could be told along the same lines.

As BIALL celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, we should remember that the continuing existence of our Association and its relationship with its various international colleagues and associations is down to the hard work of law librarians around the globe over a number of years. The ties between the sister law library organisations remain as strong as ever and it is to be hoped that the coming years will bring further cooperation and collaboration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am extremely grateful to members of BIALL and its sister organisations for content for this article. In particular to Mary Blake for her '*History of BIALL*' and also to Barbara Tearle, Christine Miskin, David Hart, Carol Billings, Ann Marie Melvie, Janet Moss, David Thomas, Fiona Fogden and Jas Breslin.

Footnote

[1] Mary Blake, *A History of the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians 1969–1999* [Warwick]: BIALL, 2000.

Biography

Loyita Worley is Director of EMEA Library Operations at Reed Smith LLP. She is a long-serving member of BIALL having been Chair of the Association in 1997/1998. She has held many positions in BIALL and is currently the Chair of Editorial Board for Legal Information Management.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1472669619000306 Published online by Cambridge University Press