

ASSOCIATION OF LAW TEACHERS

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COMMITTEE REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2005/6

Apart from the brief meeting immediately after last year's AGM in Edinburgh, there have been three full committee meetings during the year. This is one less than in recent years and was the result of an 'economy drive' following comments made by the Treasurer in presenting the accounts to the last AGM. It seems to have worked as will be seen in the Treasurer's Report without adversely affecting the effectiveness of the committee. The facts that there has been a reduction in committee expenditure and that through circumstances beyond our control, two of the three meetings had to be held in that great place of legal scholarship, *Pendril's Oak* on Holborn, shows either that the committee has high degrees of professionalism and abstinence or that we really cannot organise a decent round in a public house!

A lot of work has been done during the year by all members of the committee and thanks is due to each and every one for some substantial contribution. It should perhaps be noted here that Mark Jordan resigned from the committee for personal reasons just as the year began, Phil Harris stood down from his co-opted role after many years of appreciated service and we welcomed Craig Hughes as a member following the elections in Edinburgh.

Some events/organisations at which I or colleagues have represented the Association in some way and capacity during the year are:

- *The Law Teacher* Board meetings
- SLS conference in Glasgow and lecture in London
- A level law syllabus workshop
- Law Commission annual consultation with learned societies and its 40th anniversary lecture and dinner
- CHULS meetings
- Opening the judiciary to academics consultations
- HEA/UKCLE events including LILI in Warwick
- The CLEA Conference in Greenwich

Responses have been sent to consultations where appropriate including those to the proposed Training Framework Review, the one on library holdings, and now we have a nominee in place to join the discussions on revisiting the benchmark statement.

We have proposed members to join AQA's Subject Advisory Committee for Social Sciences (which includes Law), JASB and AHRC panels – the first successfully and we await the outcome(s) of the others.

The annual Upjohn Lecture was delivered in October 2005 by Lady Justice Arden with the title 'economic torts in the twenty first century' – the text of the lecture has appeared in Volume 40 edition 1 of *The Law Teacher*. At the post lecture meal in the 'Bleeding Heart Bistro' Dame Mary and her husband, Lord Mance proved most convivial company and left most with no doubt that they will be the first pair of married Law Lords (or judges of the Supreme Court!) without too much delay.

17 February saw a one day conference, PILE, (*Pressing Issues in Legal Education*) held at City University in Northampton Square in London, a venue hastily arranged following flooding problems with the previous room in Chancery Lane. The venue proved very satisfactory and some 25 delegates had a stimulating day debating current issues. The realisation that there is a market for this type of forum still has prompted us to actively consider another such event before the end of 2006, possibly to coincide with the relaunch of *The Law Teacher* and the 'debate event' being planned for that. A research symposium under the LERG banner is being planned for the summer.

Recent weeks have been dominated by the Norwich conference. It has been 'in the making' since the spring of 2004 and the old adage 'you can't book things too early' has proved to be true: especially as I, as Chair, was out of the country with work (and another two committee members!) for two of the five weeks before the event itself. We have excelled ourselves in attracting speakers such as Lord Slynn, Jonathan Goldsmith, Andrew Duff, Ben Hytner and David Eastwood– Charles Clarke and Tony Benn were approached but it seems that had they accepted we would have had an embarrassment of riches with all the panels and other business we have to fit in as well as Law Teacher of the Year which is already established as an important part of the legal calendar. Although writing this (just) before setting off for the conference, I hope that by the time I present the report we will all be feeling that it was two days well spent and that it compares favourably with other recent conferences.

The coming year will have its challenges, expected and unexpected. Some of these challenges relate to membership in an increasingly competitive time– maintaining and increasing the member base and to that end a working party has been set up to consider how best to target new starters, lecturers in FE, teachers in sixth form colleges and schools. Some will have to do with how we relate to bodies such as SLS (with whom we are improving the working relationship all the time) and UKCLE (with whom we have a good working relationship and an overlap of interest), SLSA and international organisations such as IALT (with whom we are beginning to explore the possibility of a joint conference), ALTA (who want to share journals and expertise) and the new IALS (which we have approached about membership as an organisation such as this meets its criteria). I am confident that we are fit to face them under the leadership of the incoming Chair, Chris Hull.

Chris Gale – Chair 2005/6