

Memorial: Elizabeth Mary Moys (1928–2002)*

¶1 Betty Moys, one of the great figures of law librarianship of the twentieth century, died suddenly on February 1, 2002 after several months' ill-health. She will be remembered for the classification scheme that bears her name, but she contributed so much more throughout her life to the library and indexing professions.

¶2 Elizabeth Mary Moys, known to all her colleagues as Betty, was born and raised in southeast England. After obtaining a BA (Hons) degree in English at Queen Mary College, London, Betty worked in a public library before attending library school, where she was one of the leading spirits in starting a students' association.

¶3 Betty's professional career began at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in 1951, and continued at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (IALS) as assistant librarian in 1952. In effect she was deputy librarian to Howard Drake,¹ from whom she claimed to have learned all she knew about law librarianship. IALS was set up in 1947 as part of the University of London to be a national and international center for legal research, and Betty took part in its early development. She was heavily involved in compiling the early editions of the institute's union lists of serials and foreign law, publications probably little known to today's generation of computer-based legal information professionals but essential aids to so many British law librarians from the 1950s to the 1980s. To further the international role of the institute, she became a member of the International Association of Law Libraries (IALL), probably at the prompting of Drake. She also spent two months in 1956 in the United States, visiting academic libraries in the northeast, working at Yale Law Library, and representing IALS at AALL's Golden Jubilee meeting in Philadelphia, having been awarded AALL's overseas travelling scholarship given by Oceana Publications.

¶4 Her itinerary sounds like a law librarian's dream—after starting in New York, she planned to visit Yale, Harvard, Boston, Cape Ann, back to New York and then upstate to Albany and Rochester, on to Philadelphia, then to Greenville, Pennsylvania via Pittsburgh, on to Washington with a side trip to Williamsburg, and return to London on the *Queen Elizabeth*, appearing at IALS on July 19, "if still alive" (her own words). The visit was a two-way experience. While Betty visited major law libraries and collected some periodical parts for the institute, Yale took the opportunity to ask her about their British colonial literature. She also

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1. See W.A. Steiner, *In Memory of Kenneth Howard Drake*, 61 *LAW LIBR. J.* 155 (1968)

contributed an article on the institute to the *Law Library Journal*.² Coincidentally her article was printed immediately after a survey of subject classification in law libraries and was followed later in the volume by a report of the Annual Meeting panel discussion on classification schemes for law libraries—all very pertinent to Betty's subsequent career.

¶5 In 1959 Betty left the institute for the University of Ghana, where she held most of the professional posts, including that of acting librarian. The Chief Justice commissioned her to review the organization of the Supreme Court Library and make recommendations for its development. Her fifty-seven-page report³ covered all aspects of running a law library, including cataloging and classification (only one and a half pages). The report included a union list of holdings of the four law libraries in Accra and recommended a program of cooperation amongst them. A nineteen-page appendix described current classification schemes for law, presented the results of a survey of users on the future arrangement of the stock in the Supreme Court Library, and outlined a new scheme in eight pages. It looks rather familiar!

¶6 Having been invited to take charge of the library for the new University of Lagos, Betty moved to Nigeria in January 1963. She planned and implemented the library from scratch, including the new library building, which was almost ready for occupation when she left in 1965 amidst the troubled political events of the mid-1960s.

¶7 While in Africa, Betty plunged into local professional activities, including bringing librarians together through cooperative committees, participating in the Nigerian Library Association, and lecturing in cataloging and classification at the Ghana Library School and Ibadan University Institute of Librarianship. She was a speaker at the Leverhulme Conference on University Libraries in Tropical Africa in 1964 and at the annual conference of the Nigerian Library Association in 1965 and also coedited a *Directory of Lagos Libraries*.

¶8 On returning to the UK, Betty first joined Glasgow University Library, and then in 1968 she was appointed librarian of Goldsmiths' College, University of London, which enabled her to return to her beloved Kent. She remained at Goldsmiths' College for twenty-one years until her retirement in 1989. My memories of her from that period include her account of the process of appointing an architect for the extension to the library. The successful person seemed to meet her exacting standards of attention to detail.

¶9 A career such as this would be achievement enough for many people. However, this is only the beginning of the story because Betty was as active outside work as within it.

2. Elizabeth M. Moys, *The Library of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, London*, 49 LAW LIBR. J. 23 (1956).

3. ELIZABETH M. MOYS, REPORT ON THE LIBRARY OF THE SUPREME COURT (1960).

¶10 The major work with which her name is synonymous is the *Moys* classification scheme for law,⁴ which ran to four editions between 1968 and 2001. She records that it was developed and tested while at the University of Lagos Library. However, it is clear that she saw the need for it while working in Accra, which had a home-made, LC-look-alike scheme for law, and her interest may date to her years at IALS. Whatever the catalyst, Betty chose law classification for her Library Association fellowship thesis and worked on it in Africa, with Drake supervising from London. She attained her fellowship in 1965 and soon found a publisher. It was quickly adopted and is now used by about two hundred law libraries from all sectors—law firm, court, and academic—principally in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the UK. The enthusiasm with which the scheme was taken up is witness to both the need for it and its excellence. Tributes describe it as “just making perfect sense” and distinguished by “rationality and elegance” and “clarity and clear logic.” The thesaurus, which was only added in the second edition,⁵ although under consideration by Betty and the British and Irish Associations of Law Librarians (BIALL) in the early 1970s, has been described as a tour de force. Betty supported librarians who wished to adopt the scheme by running in-house tutorials to help them start up. The scheme’s users were drawn into subsequent revisions, and the scheme will undoubtedly continue through the Moys User Group set up in 1995. It should not be overlooked that the production of a classification scheme is a remarkable intellectual effort that requires a deep understanding of the subject and its literature as well as of classification theory. Betty’s achievement is all the more remarkable as she did not work with law materials after leaving Lagos in 1965.

¶11 For much of her career Betty was a member of IALL and, characteristically, an active contributor, serving on the board of directors (1965–1968) and representing IALL in 1969 on a panel of the British Standards Institution that was preparing an English full edition of UDC class 3. She edited the *European Law Libraries Guide*⁶ that the Council of Europe had commissioned from IALL as a way of improving cooperation among European law libraries.

¶12 Betty was one from that founding group who had such a formative influence on BIALL and, in her case, on its publications. She participated in the Harrogate Workshops, forerunners to the foundation of BIALL, giving a long session on cataloging and classification with a preview of the *Moys* scheme at the first workshop and lecturing on cataloging legislative materials at the second.

¶13 The genesis of a journal for BIALL is described in the Association’s history.⁷ To quote from an internal memorandum on publications in 1969, “The suc-

4. ELIZABETH M. MOYS, *A CLASSIFICATION SCHEME FOR LAW BOOKS* (1968).

5. ELIZABETH M. MOYS, *MOYS CLASSIFICATION SCHEME FOR LAW BOOKS* (2d ed. 1982).

6. INT’L ASS’N OF LAW LIBRARIES, *EUROPEAN LAW LIBRARIES GUIDE* (E.M. Moys ed., 1971).

7. MARY BLAKE, *A HISTORY OF THE BRITISH AND IRISH ASSOCIATION OF LAW LIBRARIANS, 1969–1999*, at 51 (2000).

cess of any new journal is almost always largely due to the efforts of its first editor, for whom it becomes a work of devotion.”⁸ This was a prophetic description of Betty’s editorship of BIALL’s journal, *The Law Librarian*, which she agreed at short notice to take on. With characteristic thoroughness and help from the publishers Sweet & Maxwell and Butterworths, Betty saw the journal from concept to publication of the first sixteen-page issue in a few months.⁹ She continued editing it for seven years, setting and maintaining a high standard of content and presentation.

¶14 Betty’s title of Hon. Editor also encompassed responsibility for BIALL’s publication program. The idea of a manual of law librarianship was conceived at one of the Harrogate Workshops and was a priority for the new association. The final outline and detailed specification were drawn up during one lengthy BIALL Publications Sub-Committee meeting that ran over its scheduled time and continued during a gammon and chips supper at the Russell Hotel in Southampton Row (London)—a favourite adjourning place for many early BIALL committee meetings. The aim of the book was to provide a reference work on legal literature and library procedure. The latter was thought necessary because at that time so many law librarians in the British Isles operated as one-man bands. Betty found contributors, produced a prospectus, negotiated with publishers, specified a house style for the manuscripts, guided and edited contributors, and compiled the index and the list of publications cited. The *Manual*,¹⁰ as it was always known even before the title was formally agreed upon, was launched at BIALL’s 1976 Oxford conference. This is one of the few early BIALL events that was recorded. The photograph of Betty and the contributors taken at the celebration of the *Manual*’s launch can be seen in BIALL’s *History*.¹¹ Her work on the *Manual* earned Betty the first award from the Howard Drake Memorial Fund presented at a small ceremony at IALS in 1977. This was entirely appropriate bearing in mind Drake’s influence on Betty’s early career. By the early 1980s some of the *Manual* was out of date, and BIALL asked Betty to assess the appropriateness of minor revisions or a new edition. Betty’s recommendation after a chapter-by-chapter analysis of obsolescence and changes was for a new edition. It was inevitable that she was asked to edit it, and the second edition duly appeared in 1987.¹²

¶15 Throughout this period Betty was also active on other BIALL committees, especially Cataloguing and Classification, which made several submissions under her guidance on revisions to AACR and 18th and 19th Dewey. Betty’s good sense and hard work in BIALL’s early days helped to make the Association what it is

8. *Id.* at 52.

9. Subtitled the “Bulletin of the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians,” the first issue of *The Law Librarian* appeared in April 1970.

10. MANUAL OF LAW LIBRARIANSHIP: THE USE AND ORGANIZATION OF LEGAL LITERATURE (Elizabeth M. Moys ed., 1976).

11. BLAKE, *supra* note 7, at 55.

12. MANUAL OF LAW LIBRARIANSHIP: THE USE AND ORGANIZATION OF LEGAL LITERATURE (Elizabeth M. Moys ed., 2d ed. 1987)

today. Her involvement in BIALl reduced after the publication of the second edition of the *Manual* and her retirement, although she continued to attend BIALl's annual conference and, indeed, was still in demand as an editor. In 1998 she was joint recipient of BIALl's Wallace Breem Award for editing *Information Sources in Law*.¹³ As a leader in the field, BIALl invited her to be its vice president (1987–1990), and then its president (1990–1993).

¶16 Betty's energies were not diminished by retirement, only redirected to another career. She joined the Society of Indexers in 1985, qualified as a registered indexer, and set up freelance. Betty had several important practitioners' works to her credit. For her index to the *British Tax Encyclopedia* she won the Library Association and Society of Indexers' Wheatley Medal in 1991, and the index to *Archbold's Criminal Practice* gained her a nomination for the same medal. She jointly wrote a pamphlet on *Indexing Legal Materials*¹⁴ and was an active member of the Society of Indexers, holding several offices between 1992 and her death.

¶17 Betty's outstanding career was fittingly recognized by the award of the MBE for services to classification and indexing in the Birthday Honours List in 2000.¹⁵ Those of us in on the secret were delighted; Betty said that "The envelope with 'Prime Minister' on the front was a great surprise when it arrived a few weeks ago! It is very gratifying, and also humbling, as I know that so many people have done so much more than I have." I know few, if any, people who could have done so much!

¶18 Betty's great strengths were in planning and executing projects that required both vision and attention to detail. She saw both the woods and the trees. She created her reputation for "arm-twisting" to obtain contributors or collaborators, but having twisted one's arm, she gave her time unstintingly to support her "victims" and was always on top of the smallest detail whenever a contributor consulted her. She could also be a firm taskmaster—and we were the better librarians for having to meet her standards.

¶19 To anyone who did not know Betty, this account is enough to inspire awe and trepidation, but she was not like that. Meeting her professionally or socially, no one would have been over-awed because Betty was good company, interested in everyone and everything and full of humor. She did not expect to be the center of attention and would be surprised, and probably uncomfortable, with the tributes that have been paid to her. Despite what looks like a workaholic career, Betty had time for leisure. She developed an interest in gardening and landscaped the sloping site of "Hengist," her marvelously named home in Badgers Mount. She loved music and sang with a choir. She was fond of rambling. She played bridge, which

13. INFORMATION SOURCES IN LAW (Jules Winterton & Elizabeth M. Moys eds., 2d ed. 1997).

14. INDEXING LEGAL MATERIALS (Elizabeth M. Moys ed., 1993) (Society of Indexers Occasional Papers on Indexing No. 2).

15. The MBE is one of a number of honours awarded for public service. Honours are announced twice a year and the Birthday Honours List marks the Queen's official birthday in June.

led to her running bridge classes and going on bridge holidays. She enjoyed photography, and Australian colleagues recount how she had a marvelous time taking pictures during her trip there in 1991.

¶20 Betty was warmly regarded and admired by friends and colleagues around the world. With Betty's passing, one of the giants of the law library and indexing professions has left us, but the name of *Moys* will remain as her memorial.—*Barbara Tearle*¹⁶

16. Law Librarian, Bodleian Law Library, Oxford, England, and President, British and Irish Association of Law Librarians.