

## Editorial

The decision to publish a new legal periodical is not lightly undertaken and hopefully the appearance of *Legal Studies* will come to be regarded as an event of special significance. It is one of the few legal journals of general academic interest to be newly published in the post-war period and, backed by the resources of a major law publisher and sponsored and edited by the Society of Public Teachers of Law, its aim is to establish itself as an important academic journal in the common law world.

Academic law journals of general interest have a prestigious history. The doyen of UK journals, the *Law Quarterly Review*, was founded in 1885 and was closely followed by the *Juridical Review* in Scotland. Most other general legal periodicals of major interest were founded between the Wars, and there are relatively few of them. Noticeable amongst these few, the *Journal of the Society of Public Teachers of Law* was first published in 1924. That journal is now incorporated in *Legal Studies*.

Legal periodicals aimed at the professional market have usually out-numbered and out-sold academic journals. This is not surprising, and it is no more surprising that there has been considerable expansion in this area of legal publishing since the War. Paralleling this expansion has been a growth in the number of specialist journals, many of which cater for an academic as well as professional readership. These developments have been beneficial for both authors and readers, but the overall balance has shown a movement away from journals catering for the best standards in broad academic legal scholarship. In this respect the position in the United Kingdom compares unfavourably with that in the United States and, when the relative sizes of the legal professions are taken into account, the comparison with the other common law jurisdictions is little more favourable.

The Council of the Society of Public Teachers of Law, following the opinion of the previous Senior Editor of its Journal and of many members of the Society, is of the view that the range of articles published under the auspices of the Society should be widened, and the decision to replace the Journal rather than simply to change its style has been made in order to indicate as clearly as possible that there is to be a new departure. *Legal Studies*, like its predecessor, will be edited from within the Society and controlled by it. Members of the Society, it is hoped, will be among its main contributors, but the first aim will be to obtain and publish articles of distinction from all quarters and so to appeal to readers outside as well as within the common law world.

As a matter of editorial policy *Legal Studies* will not restrict its choice of material save by the criteria of scholarly merit and legal interest. We hope to publish major articles together with shorter

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contributions and reviews as is the practice of other journals, but we intend differences in emphasis. Articles will appear in much the same form as those published by other journals but we hope they will be distinguished by their scholarship and general interest and we will try to provide occasional opportunity for the longer article which cannot always be placed in existing journals. At the same time we recognise the reader's interest and, insofar as we publish longer articles, we would expect them to be longer because of the demands of their content. Although we shall publish shorter contributions whose main consideration might be a decided case or cases or a recent statute, it will not be the policy of the journal to publish the traditional technical and descriptive case and statute notes which appear in other journals. Many of these belong very naturally in specialist journals. Rather we hope to publish short contributions of scholarly and permanent interest which will take their place alongside the longer articles. These shorter contributions may concern themselves with decided cases or recent enactments, but equally they may concern themselves with other aspects of legal investigation, with issues of legal history, or philosophy or statistical or sociological investigation or indeed of any area of scholarship within the compass of the journal. Similarly, it is intended that the book review section will publish only a limited number of reviews of scholarly quality concerning themselves with evaluating and analysing the most substantial contributions to legal literature. This means that our review section will naturally be selective although, in this regard, it must be borne in mind that the *Newsletter* of the Society of Public Teachers of Law will carry a number of book reviews of the more traditional style.

At the outset the journal must go through a 'finding out' period. It must search out the best material, it must build up its readership and it must establish an identity for itself. We shall welcome comments from our readers and proposals for the journal's improvement. Above all we hope that they will come to look upon it as a journal in which they wish to see their own work published.

Initially the journal will appear three times a year but, if contributions of sufficient quality appear and if our subscribers support us, we shall try to increase the number of issues and thereby increase the opportunities which we can provide for the publication of the best in legal scholarship.

J.A.A.