

C'mon feel the Moys: a trip through the orange book

Abstract: This article is based on a course on how to use Moys classification scheme,¹ delivered by **Helen Garner** and **Felicity Staveley-Taylor** on behalf of the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL) in November 2022. The article, which is also written by Helen and Felicity, provides guidance on how to use Moys classification, explaining the features that enable the scheme to be expanded to accommodate new subject areas. The article also explains some of the features which ensure the scheme remains relevant to legal libraries today. Sections from the classification scheme, as published in the fifth edition, appear in the article text. In addition, any references to page numbers are to the fifth edition.

Keywords: information retrieval; classification; classification schemes

INTRODUCTION

Ten years have elapsed since the last edition of the Moys classification scheme was published. In this time, we have seen seismic world events, notably the Covid-19 pandemic which spread across the world and affected all areas of life. The Moys scheme, with its numerous features to accommodate new subjects, has stood up well to these recent challenges.

Key to using Moys is to understand how it is used in your own organisation to help your readers. If you have a small collection, you may decide to use the Moys numbers outlined in the schedules without adding any further information from the tables, Cutters, and A to Zs. The benefit of this approach is to keep the Moys classification numbers short and memorable for your readers; it also helps with re-shelving books and keeping the collection in good order. However, if you have a large collection or one that specialises in a particular legal subject then you will want to use the tables, Cutters, and A to Zs so that the subject nature of the book is reflected in the Moys classification number. The benefit of this approach is that readers can browse the shelves and find books on a similar subject.

Do not forget that further clarity can be added to the Moys number by adding three letter codes to represent author surnames and/or adding the year of publication.

WHAT IS THE MOYS CLASSIFICATION SCHEME?

To understand the Moys classification scheme it is imperative to read Elizabeth (Betty) Moys' original introduction, which is reprinted in the fifth edition of the Moys scheme.² In her introduction, Moys lays out the principles and reasoning for her classification scheme.

Reading this will give you an understanding of how she constructed her scheme and the reasons for her decisions. Underlying the principles was a desire to ensure that the scheme could evolve to reflect new subject areas.

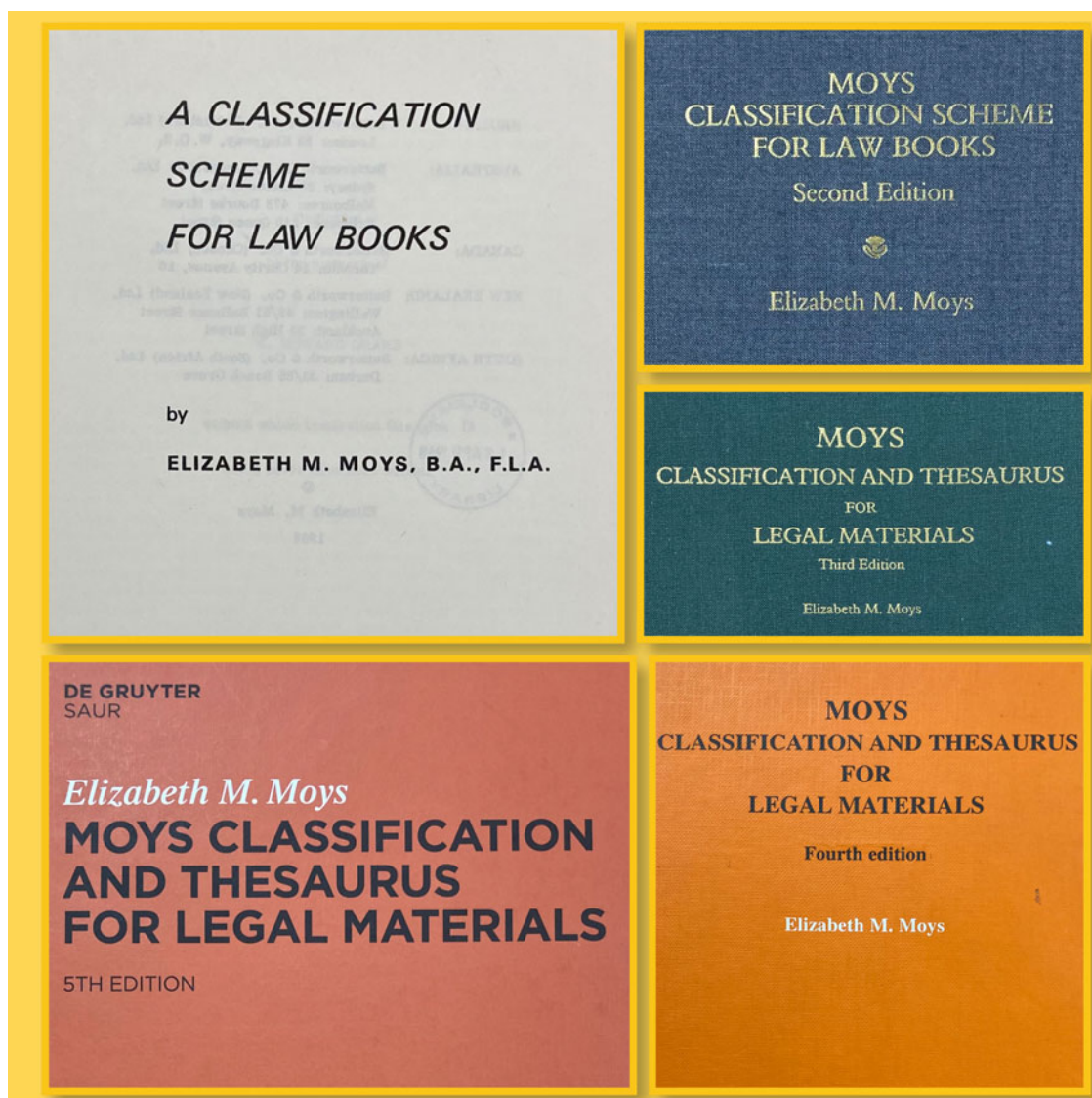
The scheme was originally devised in 1968 due to a lack of suitability of the law schedules published in the two main classification schemes at that time – Library of Congress Classification (LCC) and Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC). Moys intended that her classification scheme would fill the gap in LCC, adding in DDC notation in her second edition of the scheme in 1982. The use of notation styled after LCC or DDC means that a collection classified by Moys can easily be slotted into a larger collection that uses either classification scheme.

Moys also recognised that law is an ever-evolving discipline and her scheme included various features to allow for future expansion. These features are:

- Gaps in the notation for new numbers to be inserted
- Tables
- Cutter numbers
- A to Z listings within the schedules

Each successive edition of the Moys classification scheme has grown in size, with the two later editions using larger pages with more margin space so that classifiers can note up their copies more easily:

1 st edition ³	1968	331p
2 nd edition ⁴	1982	344p
3 rd edition ⁵	1992	386p
4 th edition ⁶	2001	551p
5 th edition	2013	674p



Collage of book covers from the different editions of the Moys classification scheme. Created by the authors using books from the Bodleian Libraries.

WHAT ARE THE SCHEDULES?

When using the Moys classification scheme, the key step is to become familiar with the schedules. The schedules run from K to KZ. The first half of the schedule is for non-national and non-modern legal systems and the second half covers modern national legal systems (Figure 1).

On the left-hand side of each page, you will see the Library of Congress Classification notation and on the right-hand side, the Dewey Decimal Classification (Figure 2).

The schedule begins with journals and reference books; moves on to the theory and philosophy of law and comparative law; then, to international law, religious legal systems; and ends with ancient and medieval legal systems.

The second half of the schedule covers modern national legal systems. These systems are split between

jurisdictions with a common law tradition and those with civil law. Moys explains in her introduction that this can be complicated with hybrid legal systems and for this reason how these systems are handled becomes a matter of choice for each library.⁷

Getting to grips with the distinction between common law and civil law jurisdictions is crucial. Moys made this division because common law countries share many of the same legal principles, and the same roots. These are legal systems which rely on judge-led laws and the system of precedent and custom. As common law systems rely on the same principles, a judge from Australia, for example, might consider a prior ruling from England when making a decision. In comparison civil law jurisdictions have a history of codified law.

Common law countries are classified between KF and KN. It is at this point that Moys made another decision about her scheme: for common law countries, primary

Schedules

K	Journals and Reference Books — 43
KA	Jurisprudence — 47
KB	General and Comparative Law — 49
KC	International Law — 52
KD	Religious Systems — 74
KE	Ancient and Medieval Law — 80
KF	Common Law – Primary Materials – British Isles — 85
KG	Common Law – Primary Materials – America — 90
KH	Common Law – Primary Materials – Australasia — 96
KL	Common Law – Treatises – General — 97
KM	Common Law – Treatises – Public Law — 106
KN	Common Law – Treatises – Private Law — 134
KP	Preferred Jurisdiction — 184
KR	Africa — 185
KS	Latin America — 189
KT	Asia and Pacific — 191
KV	Europe — 196
KW	European Union Law — 200
KZ	Non-Legal Subjects — 211
Appendix	Criminology — 212

Figure 1: Summary of schedules

materials would be classified before secondary materials. This means that common law countries have their primary materials classified between KF and KH and their secondary materials in KL to KN. However, it is important to note here that libraries may prefer not to

classify their primary materials but instead arrange by jurisdiction or by alphabetical order.

Grouping books together in KL to KN means that those on related topics are drawn together. Using tables then allows each topic to be arranged by jurisdiction.

K Journals and Reference Books 340

Note:

Some general libraries may prefer to place in another part of the library some of the material here, such as Library and Information Science K80–99/340.05 or Dictionaries, K120–6/340.08.

Journals

1 *By title, A–Z* .01

Notes:

1. As an alternative to placing all journals, regardless of legal topic, country of origin, etc., together in K1, numbers are provided in other classes, e.g. KA1, KF99 and in the Tables.

Figure 2: Layout of LCC and DDC notation

This allows easy browsing by subject and enables comparison between different common law systems. Moys also decided to differentiate between public and private laws; public laws are classified in KM whilst private laws are classified in KN.

KP can be used for libraries that want to separate their home jurisdiction from others.

Civil law systems are grouped geographically from KR to KV. Like the common law countries, the civil law jurisdictions are arranged by topic. There is a useful index of jurisdictions to enable you to find the right part of KR to KV.

One notable exception to the way the schedule is laid out is European Union (EU) law. It could be said that the handling of EU law in Moys reflects the UK's various relations with Europe. Logically EU law should appear earlier in the schedule under non-national legal systems. In 1968 the UK was not a member of the European Economic Community (EEC), therefore Moys used KC to classify laws from the EEC. By the time the second edition was published, Table IX for EEC law had been created to be used with KC, KV or KW. The third edition saw the introduction of KW as the main place to classify European Community (EC) materials, taking the content of Table IX and expanding it into the KW section of the schedule. The fourth and fifth editions continued with KW as the EC evolved into the European Union (EU). Since the publication of the fifth edition the UK has left the European Union, but this does not affect Moys, EU law continues to exist as an important body of law.

KZ is offered as a place to classify books that are non-law.

THE APPENDIX

An appendix to deal with Criminology appeared in the second edition. Moys – as flexible as ever – suggests the appendix can be used with KA, KB or KM.

WHY CAN'T I FIND MY SUBJECT IN THE INDEX-THESAURUS?

The Index-thesaurus is there to aid the classifier. There is a temptation to see the Index-thesaurus as a straightforward way to find a classification number but that is not its function. The index is an index to the schedules. In addition, it offers some suggestions about related terms,

alternate terms, etc. The Index-thesaurus cannot contain every permutation of a Moys classification number and, for that reason, knowledge of the schedules and the tables is essential to ensure that you are classifying materials accurately.

HOW DO THE TABLES WORK?

The Tables can cause confusion, but they are a clever way to save space in the schedules by avoiding repetition.

If you follow Nigella Lawson on Instagram you will see that each of her posts includes full instructions on finding the recipe, beginning "Most of you may know what's meant by 'click on link in bio', so just skip this bit, but for those who don't, let me explain". As she admits, the guidance is redundant for many, and it makes her posts repetitive and lengthy.

Moys does the opposite. Instead of spelling out the same instructions over and over again, Moys essentially says: "These patterns repeat reliably. All you need to know is the pattern, plus the beginning and the end number for this topic."

An example is at KM 11, common law countries – public law. (Figure 3).

The guidance is almost as terse as 'Link in bio'. Putting it more fully, if you have a book about public law in general in common law countries, use KM 1. But if you want to specify a jurisdiction, you should use Table IV. Your range of numbers will begin with KM 11 and end at KM 29.

Turning to Table IV on page 226 (Figure 4) you see it has two columns. Use the first column when Moys provides a range of 19 numbers to fill (as it does here, KM 11-29). The second column provides a Cutter number which you can use anywhere in common law.

The first number in Table IV is 1, for England. Using Table IV, the first number in your range here, KM 11, will stand for public law in England. The next number will be KM 11.5 for public law in Wales, and so on.

Working out this section in full, here are the Moys numbers, with the number from Table IV shown alongside in brackets:

- KM 11 (1) Public law in England
- KM 11.5 (1.5) Public law in Wales
- KM 12 (2) Public law in Scotland
- KM 13 (3) Public law in Ireland (as a whole)
- KM 14 (4) Public law in Northern Ireland

KM	Common Law Treatises – Public Law	346
1	<i>General works</i>	.01
5	Public law : private law	.02
11–29	<i>By jurisdiction</i> (Table IV)	.04–09

Figure 3: KM 11

Table IV – Common Law Jurisdictions

19 nos.	1 no. or Cutter no.	
1	.A1	England
1.5	.A15	Wales

Figure 4: Table IV

- KM 15 (5) Public law in the Republic of Ireland
- KM 16 (6) Public law in the Isle of Man
- KM 17 (7) Public law in the Channel Islands
- KM 18 (8) Public law in Jersey
- KM 19 (9) Public law in Guernsey
- KM 20 (10) Public law in Canada
- KM 21 (11) Public law in the Provinces of Canada
(A-Z by Cutter for each Province)
- KM 21.5 (11.5) Public law in North America
- KM 22 (12) Public law in the United States
- KM 23 (13) Public law in States of the US
(A-Z by Cutter for State)
- KM 24 (14) Public law in the West Indies
(A-Z by country Cutter)
- KM 26 (16) Public law in Australia
- KM 27 (17) Public law in the States of Australia
(A-Z by Cutter for State)
- KM 27.5 (17.5) Public law in Australia and New Zealand together
- KM 28 (18) Public law in New Zealand
- KM 29 (19) Public law in the Commonwealth generally
- KM 29.5 (19.5) Public law in the European Union
(optional number – only use if you want to put EU law with your common law collection)

Sometimes people become unstuck with the Tables because they try to ‘add’ the numbers from the tables, rather than insert them into the range. If you ‘add’ the number 10 for Canada to KM 11, you’ll get 21; but as you see above, the correct number for Canada is KM 20. You should be using the 10th number in the range, not adding.

Some people find it helps to count through the numbers aloud, or since Moys gives you the last number in each range, to work backwards from that. Above all,

remember: the Moys number you create should always have the same last digit as the number in the table.

If you use the Dewey form of Moys, the instructions for geographical jurisdictions are on page 27 of the introduction. Instead of using Table IV, insert the Dewey geographical numbers. The range for Common law – public law is 346.04-09, the DDC number is 94 and so public law in Australia will be 346.094.

USING TABLE II

Moys provides a detailed schedule for common law jurisdictions in KF to KN. For all other geographical jurisdictions (and for General & Comparative law at KB), Moys simply provides the range of numbers, and then you use Table II.

As before, the principle is that the same topics appear in the same pattern for each jurisdiction. However, Table II recognises that some countries may have a larger body of publications than others, and will need a larger range of numbers. Looking at Table II (Figure 5) you see four columns, labelled A-D. A is used for countries which are likely to need the most detail (using 90 numbers). The ranges get progressively smaller, down to column D which is only 12 numbers long. The last column, F, is for libraries using Dewey notation instead.

In the schedules in KR-KV, each civil law country is assigned a letter, which tells you which column of Table II to use. For example, here at KV, Europe (Figure 6):

For France you use column A of Table II, starting at KV 1101 and ending at KV 1250. Follow the same process as before, slotting the numbers into the range you have. Using 61 from Table II for the Legal system, you will get KV 1161 for the legal system in France. Using 105.5 for Construction law for you will get KV 1250 for

Table II – Subjects of Law

	A	B	C	D	F
	90 nos.	60 nos.	40 nos.	12 nos.	class 349
Primary materials <i>see</i> Table I	1–60	1–20	1–10	1–8	01–02
Legal system	61	21	11	9	03
Bibliography (alternative to K30–76)	(61.1)	(21.1)	(11.6)	(9.01)	(0301)
Customary law	62	22	12	.1	0302

Figure 5: Table II

601–680	Western Europe (B)
701–780	Portugal (B)
781–800	Azores (D)
801–820	Madeira (D)
821–900	Spain (B)
901–920	Balearic Islands (D)
921–940	Canary Islands (D)
961–980	Andorra (D)
1001–1080	French Community (B)
1101–1250	France (A)
1301–1380	Belgium (B)
1401–1480	Netherlands (B)
1501–1580	Luxembourg (B)

Figure 6: KV, Europe

construction law in France. The final number in the sequence, KV 1250, will relate to the final number in Table II, that is, costs in France.

A smaller jurisdiction, such as Andorra, needs the smallest range of numbers, column D of Table II. This would result in KV 969 for the legal system in Andorra, and KV 980 for civil procedure in Andorra. For the smaller ranges, keep a close eye on the indentation of numbers in the tables; the final number would be KV 980.6, for costs in Andorra.

If you are classifying primary materials, you'll see that Table II refers you back to Table I. The same columns apply here too; France uses column A, so that KV 1101 is for French official gazettes. Official gazettes in the Falklands would be KS 2601, using column D.

If your collection is focussed on one of the jurisdictions with a smaller range of numbers (B, C or D) you also have the option to use KP. This is the Moys equivalent of 'left blank for your own message' where you can create your own schedule, ideally based on the patterns in Table I and II.

DO I HAVE TO USE THE TABLES?

No. Several of the Tables are completely optional, for example Table VI (for special legal forms such as

casebooks) or Table III (for dates). Check the instructions at the beginning of each Table, and consider the needs of your collection.

If your collection is focussed on a single jurisdiction you may even decide to avoid Table II and IV. For example, you could use KM 5 for all your books about public law, regardless of jurisdiction. If you do have an occasional book relating to another jurisdiction you could decide to flag these using a country Cutter.

WHAT ARE CUTTERS?

Cutters are a simple way of abbreviating names or subjects, to add detail to a classmark while keeping it short and in alphabetical order. Although 'cutters' sounds like a descriptive term, they are named after Charles Ammi Cutter, a librarian who came up with this alphanumeric format as a way of maintaining alphabetical order. Today, many libraries, including the Bodleian Law Library, use the Cutter Sanborn table⁸ to ensure that books file alphabetically by author, without needing to spell out the entire author surname.

Moys offers a variety of ready-made Cutters to help you arrange material in alphabetical order:

1. The Index of Jurisdictions (pages 235-250) gives a comprehensive list of geographical Cutters. You can choose whether to use these to add detail. For example, KM 582 is the number for criminal trial practice in the US. To arrange material by state, you can add the Cutters as follows:
 KM 582.M18 for criminal trial practice in Maine
 KM 582.M42 for Maryland
 KM 582.M45 for Massachusetts
2. At suitable points in the main schedule, Moys suggests subject Cutters. For example, in International Law, KC 219 is given for international criminal courts generally, followed by suggestions for specific courts at KC 219.1 (Figure 7)
3. Several of the Tables offer Cutters which you can add to the end of any classmark. In Tables with more than one column, these Cutters are headed *One no.*, indicating that you can use them when Moys hasn't left space for a range of numbers. For example, the

219	International criminal courts	.39
	(General works. For reports of cases use KC20–55/341.13–5)	
.1	<i>Individual courts, A–Z, e.g.</i>	.391
	.15 International Criminal Court	
	.R9 International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda	
	.Y8 International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia	

Figure 7: KC 219

after the initial letter S								
for the second letter	a	ch	e	hi	mop	t	u	
use number	2	3	4	5	6	7-8	9	

Figure 8: Cutters starting with S

second column of Table IV offers .Q22 for 'Females', so you could expand KL 254 for 'Coroners' (in common law jurisdictions) to KL 254.Q22 to specify female coroners.

HOW DO I CREATE A NEW CUTTER?

Wherever Moys says A-Z, e.g. as it does at KC 219 [Figure 7](#), it means "feel free to create your own alphabetical subject list here". There are instructions on page 26 of the introduction.

Bear in mind that the purpose of Cutters is to get your books filed in alphabetical order by subject. Whatever the subject, you will always keep the first letter. For 'Sport' the first letter of your Cutter must be S. Then, you need to decide which number comes after the S, to represent the letter P, and ensure that Cutters file in the right order ([Figure 8](#)).

S is such a common first letter that it is treated slightly differently from other consonants; use this first set of numbers on page 26. The second letter of 'Sport' is P, so use the column headed *mop* which gives you the number 6. The resulting Cutter for Sport should be S6. If the subject was 'Sentencing' it would be S4, and 'Shopping' would be S5. If it was 'Stop and search' the instructions say you should use either S7 or S8, depending on what other Cutters you already have.

These Cutters are usually context-dependent. Elsewhere in the schedule you could use the same Cutter, S6, for 'Smuggling' without confusion. However, if you do need to differentiate between Cutters you can add another digit, e.g. S61 to file before S62, S63 and so on.

Use the second set of numbers whenever your subject starts with a consonant which is not S. For example, 'Trespass' would be T7. The third set of numbers (at the top of page 27) is used for subjects starting with a vowel, producing, for example, A7 for 'Art'.

As with any decisions you've made, keep a note of the Cutters you've created, to ensure consistency.

DO I HAVE TO USE CUTTERS?

No, Cutters are optional. Do you have a large enough number of books to make it worthwhile sorting them further? Plan carefully to avoid Cutter clutter. How long will your shelf label be? Will your readers and shelvers be confused?

Other practical considerations: consider the typeface you use for your book labels – will I5 look different from

I5? If you decide to use the US state Cutters described above, how will you treat material about US federal law? Could you end up with US states interfiled with common law countries?

I STILL CAN'T FIND THE IDEAL NUMBER FOR MY TOPIC – WHAT NOW?

You may find you have books on newer areas of law (Brexit or Bitcoin for example) which don't fit tidily into the existing schedules. The beauty of Moys is that there is plenty of space in the schedules for expansion. If the Tables and Cutters don't offer enough flexibility, there is room for you to create your own number.

At the Bodleian Law Library, reclassifying our jurisprudence books was quite challenging. Being librarians, our reclassifiers weren't familiar enough with abstruse philosophical traditions. Was this book about 'idealism' or 'positivism'? We simply didn't know which philosophical tradition each author might fall into.

There is a gap in Moys between KA 50 and KA 55. We decided to create a new number at KA 51 for individual legal theorists, using Cutters to group books by author (e.g. KA 51.F5 for John Finnis, or KA 51.K4 for Hans Kelsen). This was a pragmatic decision, just because it was easier for us to identify the thinker than to identify a school of thought.

We chose KA 51 because there was a large gap available there, and because it seemed about the right logical point in the scheme, coming after the very general theoretical headings and being similar to the *National schools of legal theory*, A-Z which precedes it at KA 50.

If in doubt you could post on the Moys discussion group, lis-moys-users@jiscmail.ac.uk to ask for advice.

CONCLUSIONS

It can feel daunting when new legal topics appear that do not have an obvious home in the schedules. Remember – it is not only the schedules that you have at your disposal. Think around the topic. Can a table help you to expand the number? Or is there a handy gap in the notation that allows you to add in an extra number? Be bold in your classification! There are no right and wrong answers when it comes to classification; the correct answer is the one which enables your reader to find the book that they want on the library shelf. Always remember to make a note of any amendments or additions you make to the schedules so that you have a record to refer back to.

Sharing your problem topics and classification ideas via the JISC mailing list will assist the community of Moys classifiers.

APPRECIATION

The authors would like to thank Diana Morris, editor of the fifth edition, for the knowledge of the scheme that she passed on to us. We would also like to pay tribute to Elizabeth Moys for her work on the classification scheme, 55 years later it is still as relevant and as useful as it was

in 1968. We would also like to thank all the librarians that have attended our courses and commented on the mailing list over the years, which has helped us to think of ways in which the scheme can align itself with the modern day legal world. Finally, the biggest thank you goes to staff at the Bodleian Law Library – past and present – who have worked tirelessly on classifying and reclassifying books in the Bodleian Law Library's collection, their questions about the scheme have helped to hone our Moys classification skills.

Footnotes

¹ Elizabeth M. Moys, *Moys Classification and Thesaurus for Legal Materials* (Diana Morris ed, 5th ed, De Gruyter Saur c2013).

² *ibid.*

³ Elizabeth M. Moys, *A classification scheme for Law Books* (Butterworths 1968).

⁴ Elizabeth M. Moys, *Moys Classification Scheme for Law Books* (Butterworths 1982).

⁵ Elizabeth M. Moys, *Moys Classification and Thesaurus for Legal Materials* (Bowker Saur 1992).

⁶ Elizabeth M. Moys, *Moys Classification and Thesaurus for Legal Materials* (KG Saur 2001).

⁷ Elizabeth M. Moys, *Moys Classification and Thesaurus for Legal Materials* (Diana Morris ed, 5th ed, De Gruyter Saur c2013).

⁸ <<http://cutternumber.com/>>.

Biographies

Helen Garner was appointed as the Bodleian Law Librarian at the University of Oxford in January 2018. Previously Helen held the post of Information Resources Librarian. Prior to working at the Bodleian Law Library Helen worked as a librarian in the City of London at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer and White & Case. Helen was a member of the Editorial Board for the fifth edition of the Moys Classification Scheme published in 2012.

Until 2022, **Felicity Staveley-Taylor** was the Information Resources Librarian at the Bodleian Law Library, overseeing the Moys reclassification team. Along with Helen Garner, she has presented Moys classification training online and in person on behalf of BIALL. She is now Senior Library Assistant at Oriel College Library and is looking forward to reorganising its law collection.