

EDITORIAL

This is the first issue of *Legal Studies* which I have had the pleasure of editing. I am grateful for the confidence of the *Society* in entrusting the task to me and my colleagues in Leeds. With the support, encouragement and criticism of contributors and readers, we hope to be able to take the journal forward from where John Andrews and his team have so ably brought it to date.

It is fitting to acknowledge the debt of gratitude which the *Society* and the journal owes to John Andrews. He was responsible for launching and establishing *Legal Studies* as a leading academic journal. The history is recounted in his final editorial in the last issue. But that account understates his achievement in turning the ambitions of the Council of the Society of Public Teachers of Law into actuality. The numbers of academics in law faculties have grown apace in the last fourteen years, and the number of legal periodicals has increased at least as fast. Through his editorship of *Legal Studies*, John Andrews has sought to foster high levels of legal scholarship and to encourage younger academics. Both those who have benefited from his help and encouragement and the academic legal community in general are grateful for all he has done.

On a personal note, I would like to thank him for the helpful way he has ensured a smooth transition. We all wish him every success as he guides the wider academic community through a (never-ending?) period of turbulence and change.

The Leeds editorial team also wish to acknowledge the important contributions of Sue Arrowsmith and Barry Hough as assistant editors in recent years. We are glad that the Aberystwyth connection with *Legal Studies* is not being severed completely in that Professor Richard Kidner is continuing his important rôle as Reviews Editor.

A new editorial team does not mark any radical departure in terms of editorial policy or in terms of the standards set for the journal. The approach of 'continuity in change' will, no doubt, lead to incremental changes over time, but we start by reiterating the basic principles of editorial policy rehearsed by John Andrews in his editorial in the first issue of *Legal Studies* and in his last.

As a matter of editorial policy, *Legal Studies* does not restrict its choice of material save by the criteria of scholarly merit and legal interest. Because *Legal Studies* is a generalist journal sent, in particular, to all SPTL members, the articles which it publishes must be worthy of note by more than specialists in a specific branch of law. Such articles should be distinguished from those published in specialist journals by their scholarship and general interest. For instance, an article might advance a new approach or a new theory in an area, or its coverage of the topic might otherwise be a significant contribution to our understanding of law. The journal welcomes both longer pieces (typically between 8,000 and 10,000 words) and shorter contributions. Shorter contributions, in

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particular, may well wish to focus on a particular decided case or cases, or a recent statute. The journal hopes to publish such contributions where they have a scholarly and permanent interest, rather than the traditional expository and technical notes which appropriately appear in specialist journals.

As a general journal, *Legal Studies* will continue to reflect the wide range of legal scholarship not only in doctrinal legal writing, but also in the historical, philosophical, psychological, and sociological aspects of law. Since 1981, the nature of legal education has become a matter of heightened interest both among academics and more generally. It is also a matter of great concern to the *Society* as a body. Thus, although *Legal Studies* principally publishes works of legal scholarship reflecting basic research on substantive and adjectival law, it also welcomes scholarly contributions on how law is learnt and taught.

In similar vein, the book review section will continue to publish a limited number of reviews of scholarly quality concerned to evaluate and analyse the most substantial recent contributions to legal literature. As a result, the book review section will remain highly selective. It must, however, be remembered that the *SPTL Reporter* contains a number of book reviews of a more traditional kind.

We look to the support and suggestions of colleagues to enable *Legal Studies* to play its part in sustaining and promoting that high quality of scholarship for which the academic legal community in the United Kingdom is rightly renowned.

John Bell,
January 1994