

## **Senior Reference Librarian at Southwestern University School of Law Library. Los Angeles, California by David. L. McFadden**

Visit Date: October /November 1995.

For two weeks in late October and early November 1995 I was a visiting law librarian at University of Glasgow. I first found out about this from FCIL's Clearinghouse for Internships and International Personnel Exchanges (aka Clearinghouse for International Placement). Besides being able to travel to a foreign country, I think both Glasgow University and I benefited in a number of ways from this experience.

On such a short visit, there is not much opportunity to do much more than observe. I was able to see the library operations, some of the law school and a few Scottish courts. Scotland has a different legal system borrowing elements from both civil and common law traditions. For example, the civil law concept of delictual liability is used instead of torts. Also, certain treatises have obtained a status equal to cases and statutes. Legal education is also different than in the United States. Students enter law school at the age of 17 or 18 and study for four years for the LL.B., then take one year for a Diploma in Legal Practice and then two years serve as a trainee for solicitors. The post-diploma training period can be a wee bit shorter for advocates, the Scots equivalent of barristers.

The library that I was visiting is organized differently from most law school libraries in the states and even from many in the United Kingdom. (Strathclyde University also in Glasgow has a departmental law library run by a university library employee!) Glasgow University's law librarian, Heather Worledge-Andrew, is actually their only Subject Specialist in Law, the European Union and the Council of Europe. Instead of being in an independent departmental library, the law materials are housed as just one of the collections in a much larger library. They were amazed that although Southwestern has approximately the same student population (if Glasgow's business law students are included), that we have 20 f.t.e. including 8 professional librarians. Of course, many of the services that Southwestern's library has to provide are covered by general library or law school personnel at Glasgow.

I did not go to Glasgow to help on a specific project or consult or for some other particular purpose. I was able, however, to do a number of things that were mutually beneficial to all of us. By attending a small seminar class on the U.S. Supreme Court, I unofficially "co-taught" the class. I interjected comments, insights and perspectives. Luckily, I attended a class early in the term which focused on the American legal system and how the Supreme Court fits into it, so this wasn't too difficult to do. Springing from this was an opportunity to give research instruction to the seminar students who had to research a Supreme Court justice and related case law. I also had an assignment from one of our professors at Southwestern who is writing an article on the right to silence and wanted to know the Scots perspective on this. By having this side project, I was able to really learn Scots legal materials by having to use them. In addition, I helped the first-year law students do their legal research assignments. That's quite

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something for someone whose only experience in Scottish law prior to arriving was reading a number of articles and a small book and making an afternoon visit to the Los Angeles County Law Library.

By watching Heather work, I was able to see how she does things over there. Some familiar concerns and problems arose including: frustration over acquisitions procedures, book prices and budgets; having the library deal with students trying to do first-year legal research problems; and coping with the library and law school bureaucracy and personalities. I didn't need to travel all the way to Scotland for this but it was helpful to see these things. We are feeling our way regarding the Internet at Southwestern and it was helpful to see a library that is a bit ahead of us in its use. I got lists of Heather's and the dean of the law school's favorite international law Internet sites. I also helped in a training session. Once again, I could have seen and done this here in the states but when do we have time to visit other libraries for more than a few hours or set up domestic exchanges?

Since Heather is a relatively new law librarian, only having worked in law for a little over 18 months when I was there, I was able to assist her with international law acquisitions and on some specific reference questions. I was also able to give her some insights about Lexis and Westlaw. Although they have Lexis, our educational contracts are much better and less limited.

In addition, to the Glasgow University experience, I also visited briefly one afternoon another law school library in Glasgow, the University of Strathclyde and also saw a solicitors' firm library. On such a short visit it is impossible to see all that you would like but getting to see the other libraries gave me some other Scots examples to compare to my host institution.

I would recommend an exchange or visit to any law librarian able to do it. If you aren't able to participate in an exchange, or visit a law library in another country, you may want to be open to inviting a visitor to your library. Both institutions and all the individuals involved can get much out of the experience.