
EDITOR'S REPORT 2023

This is my second report as editor of the *Journal*. 2022-2023 has been a busy year. The *Journal* has continued with its usual thrice-yearly volumes, all of which met their usual publication deadlines. This is of itself a huge achievement, and testament to all the work that goes on behind the scenes by the section editors (Russell Dewhurst, Frank Cranmer and David Willink), peer reviewers, the production team, and all the various contributors dedicated enough to embark on the process of submitting their research for publication in the first place. It bears repeating that much of the work of the *Journal* goes unremunerated. On behalf of the Society, I thank all those individuals for their sterling work.

As I finish writing this report, I have just been told that the final version of the new contract between the Ecclesiastical Law Society and Cambridge University Press (CUP) is somewhere 'in the ether' and making its way to Lizzie Wilson and Edward Dobson. The application of their signatures to that contract will bring an end to over 12 months' worth of negotiation to renew our publishing arrangements with CUP. The headline result is that, for at least the next five years, we will remain one of a very small number of learned societies to retain a *print* issue of its journal. Members should be in no doubt that, with a shift in the publishing market generally—which moves ever faster and closer towards online-only publication—along with the spectre of COVID-19 and the impact that the pandemic had on budgets for all concerned, this was hard-fought for. If the luxury of a print edition is to continue beyond the next contract renewal, it is essential that the Society as a whole continues to work on growing its membership both at home and abroad—I am convinced that all members have a part to play in that, in sharing all the good (and exciting!) work that we do.

Another benefit brought by the new contract will be the digitisation of all the content published in the *Journal* prior to 2007, that is, prior to our relationship with CUP, when the Society managed everything 'in-house'. This will, I hope, be another important string to the Society's bow in furthering its charitable objectives, by making scholarship concerning ecclesiastical law more widely available. Some new arrangements will (all being well) come into effect from 2024. From next year, contributors will need to use a new online submission portal. The next stage is to design a bespoke system with CUP to ensure that it serves our needs. When this is up and running, I will welcome feedback. The current tried-and-tested peer review system will continue without alteration for the time being. Before leaving this topic, I must formally acknowledge the huge support offered to me by Stephen Hogg during the negotiation

process. His command of the numbers and the spreadsheets was essential to the process and the moral support he offered was invaluable.

There have been some changes to the editorial board. Professor Ian Leigh (University of Durham) has retired after many years of service, and I wish formally to thank him on behalf of my predecessors for his support for the *Journal*. I have appointed three additional members to the board: the Reverend James Bradley (Catholic University of America), Professor Nazila Ghanea (UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, and the University of Oxford), and the Right Worshipful Morag Ellis KC (Dean of the Arches and Auditor). I thank them all—and all other members—for agreeing to serve on the board, and their willingness to share their wisdom and time. I consider myself very fortunate indeed to have the benefit of such a diverse and esteemed group of academics and practitioners, whom I frequently rely on for advice and counsel.

The editorial board met at Pembroke College, Cambridge in October 2022. 15 or so members of the board were able to join either in-person or via ‘Zoom’. This was the first in-person meeting of the board for many years. Our discussions lasted all afternoon, and we were able to bond and re-energise our efforts over a wonderful dinner at High Table afterwards. I take this opportunity to thank all members of the board who took part for being so engaged and supportive, and Pembroke for its hospitality.¹ The board heard from CUP as to its recent marketing efforts and endorsed the amendments I proposed to the ‘house style’. Eagle-eyed readers will see that those modest amendments were implemented from January 2023. The most significant outcome of the board meeting, though, was the recommendation of the board to accept the new type-setting format that CUP has offered us, which is being rolled out across all CUP journals which address humanity subjects. I have decided to implement this change from January 2024. It is important that our *Journal*, as a leading output of scholarly material, remains as accessible as possible to practitioners, academics, and students. The main benefit of the new format will be—by the magic of complex software I don’t pretend to understand—an increase in our global reach.

Professor Mark Hill KC continues in his role as consultant editor. His support remains indispensable in both marketing the *Journal* on his travels abroad, and also by way of fostering a rich and diverse source of materials for publication. I am also grateful for his practical assistance with proof-reading and other laborious activities.

¹ In particular those who hosted us: the Master, Lord Smith of Finsbury; the Dean, the Rev’d Dr James Gardom; and my former tutors, Mr Nick McBride and Professor John Bell. And Matthew Mellor for the provision of a room in which to meet, and affording so much help with all the practicalities.

I am particularly proud that the *Journal* is now featured more and more frequently in the popular press. To have one's editorial decisions the subject of comment in both *Private Eye*² and *The Times* is quite the honour(!) But more seriously, the *Journal's* contribution to debates about the efficacy of the National Safeguarding Team³ and contested heritage, to name but a few, is ever growing. Long may that continue. My intention is that the *Journal* will continue to maintain its high academic standards and its broad global reach. The editorial policy remains focussed on the study of the law of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion, but also encompasses broader ecumenical, international, social, historical, and comparative perspectives. I continue to welcome the submission of articles and comment pieces, particularly from young scholars.

5 May 2023

BENJAMIN HARRISON

Editor

² 'Literary Review', *Private Eye*, 27 May-16 June 2022, No. 1574, p. 44. Cf. N Doe, 'Faith, Freedom and Family: An Introduction to the Work of John Witte Jr' (2022) 24 Ecc LJ 175 and J Witte Jr, 'Law at the Backbone: The Christian Legal Ecumenism of Norman Doe (2022) 24 Ecc LJ 192.

³ 'Bishop Accuses C of E of "seeing off" abuse survivors', *Premier Christian News* <https://premierchristian.news/us/news/article/bishop-accuses-c-of-e-of-seeing-off-abuse-survivors>, accessed 5 May 2023. Cf. P Broadbent, 'Reflections on the Workings of General Synod' (2023) 25 Ecc LJ 19.