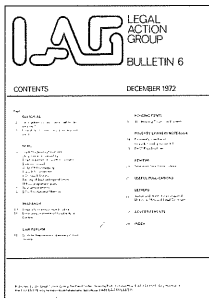


From LAG Bulletin to Legal Action

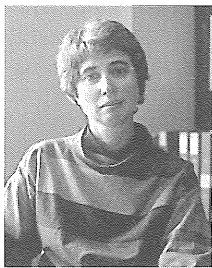
1972

Newly formed Legal Action Group issues its Circular No 1 in January – five duplicated A4 pages stapled together ... By December six issues have been produced; size is 24 pages, now printed and bound and called *LAG Bulletin* ... December issue includes editorial 'Legal advice and assistance – where are we now?', news, research reports, features, report of LAG's first general meeting on 18 November 1972 at LSE, 'Poverty lawyer's notebook', reviews, letters and half a page of advertisements (placed free) ... The *Bulletin* is edited by director Susan Marsden, and typed, duplicated and distributed to over 500 members by office manager Jean Dyer ... annual subscription rates: firms £5.75, individuals £3.50, students £1.



1973

LAG Bulletin, size 24 or 28 pages, produced monthly from February ... Clive Morrick joins as LAG as assistant director and commissions and edits 'Poverty law and practice' section ... Susan Marsden edits the rest and writes editorials and news ... Jean Dyer keeps the subscription records, produces address labels, types all copy, compiles an index, writes book reviews and in June writes much-quoted article 'Just what work do solicitors do?' about a friend's difficulty in finding a lawyer after she was evicted ... Contributors to the *Bulletin* include: Andrew Phillips, Henry Hodge, Walter Merricks (whose 'Calculating civil legal aid' example first appears in April), Dawn Oliver, Simon Hillyard, Tony Lynes, Martin Partington, Stephen Sedley, Stuart Weir, Richard Drabble and Michael Zander, whose coverage of a legal aid conference in South Africa is one of LAG's first looks at legal services abroad.



Susan Marsden

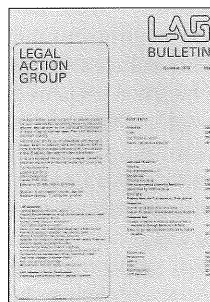
1974

In January issue, director Susan Marsden reports that subscribers number over 1,600, and concludes, 'Our target is to get a copy of the *Bulletin* into the office of every solicitors'

firm and every general law library in the next three years.' Law and practice section expands, covering planning, environment, housing, welfare law, legal aid, employment law, immigration, civil rights, consumer rights and procedure ... First charges made for advertisements – 2p per word.

1975

Bulletin is redesigned in November with lighter weight paper and closer typeface to reduce number of pages, saving about £1,300 in postage costs ... Paper changed to grey throughout to avoid show-through ... Subscriptions are: £10 for firms; £5.75 for individuals; £2.50 for students ... Binders are sold for £2.



1976

Law and practice section now includes family law, children, European law, crime and mental health ... Andrew Arden and Bill Nash act as consultants, writing and commissioning articles.

1978



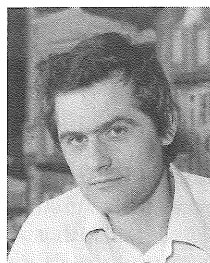
Jenny Levin

Hansen develops investigative journalism with particular emphasis on the legal system, legal aid, miscarriages of justice, magistrates' courts, official secrets civil liberties and complaints against solicitors ... Barrister Audrey Sander is appointed as editorial assistant ... Subscribers exceed 4,000.

1979

First appearance (in February) of brief case summaries in an updater, titled 'Recent developments'.

Jenny Levin and Ole Hansen join LAG as co-directors and joint editors of *LAG Bulletin* ... Jenny Levin writes and edits law and practice articles and campaigns on substantive law, especially family law and social security ... Ole



Ole Hansen

1980

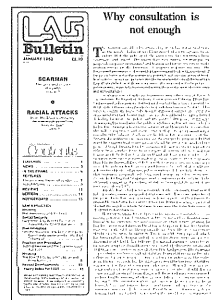
Louise ffoulkes joins LAG as editorial assistant and Sally Hughes as researcher and contributor to features pages. In April issue, Howard Levenson publishes first 'league table' of legal aid refusal rates in Inner London magistrates' courts in 1978, confirming practitioners' experience of wide discrepancies and showing that Highbury Corner has highest overall percentage of refusals.

1981

Cyril Glasser writes article about LAG's first 10 years in November ... In December, Roger Smith, then legal officer at Child Poverty Action Group, writes his first article for LAG, on Social Security Commissioners decisions on supplementary benefit ... National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux takes out a bulk order for the *Bulletin*, so that every CAB in the country receives a copy.

1982

LAG Bulletin is redesigned, splitting into 'white pages' with editorial on front cover, more news coverage, journalistic features, pictures and cartoons, and 'grey pages' containing law and practice articles ...



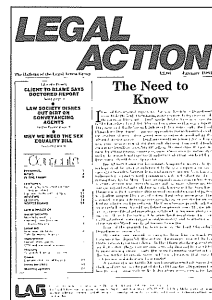
November issue carries articles about courts' treatment of people arrested in the inner city civil disturbances in summer 1981, including results of LAG's own survey.

1983

Ole Hansen writes a number of articles criticising the Law Society's handling of complaints against solicitors, particularly for clients Leslie Parsons and Peggy Wood ... Jenny Levin comments on government's proposals for a family court and the continuing debate over conciliation in family matters.

1984

LAG Bulletin is renamed *LEGAL ACTION* and new red masthead is designed ... In February, Martin Partington reports on law reform in Australia in first article of 'LAG's new occasional series on developments in the legal services of other jurisdictions' ... In May, Ole Hansen reveals that the 'L' code – the instruction manual for DHSS officers assessing people's legal aid eligibility for the Law Society – contains secret orders to officers to pass confidential information on to benefits officers, in contravention of the Legal Aid Act 1974. As a result, the instructions are suspended ... When Jenny Levin and Ole Hansen leave LAG, Louise ffoulkes and Sally Hughes take over as editor and deputy editor ... Sheila



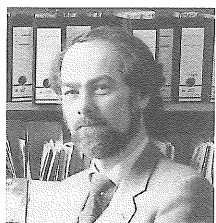
Kavanagh and Lesley Exton are appointed as editorial assistants ... During the miners' strike, *Legal Action* carries articles on social security benefits for strikers, bail applications in magistrates' courts and treatment of arrested picketing miners by the police and the courts.

1985

Subscriptions are increased after two years to: £55 for firms, £36 for individuals and £15 for students ... Louise ffoulkes leaves LAG on world cycling trip ... Ros O'Brien joins as editorial assistant on *Legal Action* and books ... *Legal Action* reports on the campaign for an independent body to deal with complaints against solicitors: the introduction by Alf Dubs MP of a private member's bill drafted by LAG, management consultants' report on the Law Society's organisation and structure, National Consumer Council research, letter from LAG to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and a reply from the Lord Chancellor, Lord Hailsham ... September sees first appearance of quarterly 'Recent developments in housing law' series written by Jan Luba and Nic Madge – then 2½ pages long.

1986

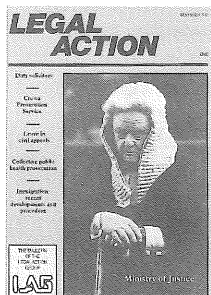
Legal Action continues to cover the struggles to set up satisfactory police station duty solicitor schemes as the PACE Codes of Practice come into force ... Roger Smith joins LAG as director and general editor of



Roger Smith

Jenny Hurstfield

Legal Action, with Sheila Kavanagh and Lesley Exton editing the white and grey pages respectively ... Roger Smith's first features include an examination of the Legal Aid Efficiency Scrutiny (October) and a proposal to replace the Lord Chancellor with a Ministry of Justice (November) ... *Legal Action* is redesigned with a picture on front, which becomes glossy grey with red masthead, and news digest on back ... Subscription rates are: firms £60, individuals £38, students £16; number of subscribers reaches 5,800.



1987

In first of a series of features on legal services around the UK, Roger Smith and Ben Rose report from Tyneside in April ... *Legal Action* covers LAG's responses to the Civil Justice Review's consultation papers and the white paper proposing a Legal Aid Board ... In the run-up to the general election, *Legal Action* reviews the legal services policies of the opposition parties: Labour and the Liberal/SDP Alliance ... On its first anniversary, Sheila Kavanagh examines the workings and suc-

cess of the Solicitors Complaints Bureau, concluding that it has yet to show its 'teeth' ... Roger Smith reports on legal services in Northern Ireland (August) and the North West (October), and on the NACAB and Law Society conferences in York and Vienna respectively ... Hilary Arnott replaces Sheila Kavanagh as news and features editor.

1988

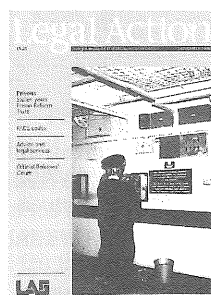
Maggie Warner becomes *Legal Action*'s subscriptions manager, in charge of transferring the database from an early CP/M computer to a 'state of the art' PC running under DOS ... *Legal Action* reports the findings of the Civil Justice Review and the Marre Committee on the legal profession, examines proposals in Legal Aid Bill for franchising or contracting out legal aid work and setting up a Legal Aid Board, covers and comments on the new benefits scheme in Social Security Act 1986, which comes into force in April, explaining its effect on different groups of people, and raises the question of possible miscarriages of justice in the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four cases.

1989

Legal Action comments on and reports reactions to the green paper on the legal profession ... An article by Vickie Macnair on CAB volunteers, 'It's not fun any more' provokes unprecedented response of letters, published in July ... As the Legal Aid Board comes into operation in April, Roger Smith analyses its franchising proposals for green form (August) and interviews its chief executive, Steve Orchard (December).

1990

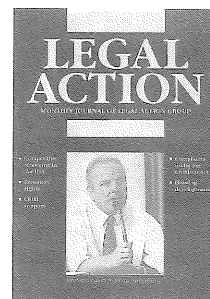
In February, LAG's policy officer, Anne Grosskurth, summarises LAG's response to the Home Office working party on the right of silence, arguing that its removal will undermine the basis of the criminal justice system ... *Legal Action* is redesigned, with new typeface and cream cover. Law and practice pages are no longer grey, but retain a grey margin strip.



1991

Law and practice pages carry 'basic guides' in housing, immigration, employment and legal aid ... Roger Smith reports on his trip to research legal services in Canada ... After one year of poll tax, *Legal Action* covers problems of assessment and enforceability, beginning its unique coverage of otherwise unreported local tax cases ... As the government sets up a Royal Commission on Criminal Justice, Hilary Arnott warns that too much should not be expected of royal commissions and Anne Grosskurth summarises LAG's submission to the Runciman Commission.

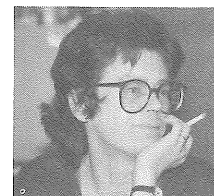
1993



Legal Action cover is changed to purple ... Roger Smith reports on Australian legal services (January) and criticises Legal Aid Board's proposed transaction criteria (February) ... Monthly updater expands to two pages.

1994

Subscribers number 6,000 ... Readership survey finds that over 50 per cent of respondents always read the news and the law and practice section ... After a year's illness, Hilary Arnott dies in December.



Hilary Arnott

1995

Improved index for 1994 includes lists of cases and statutory instruments ... Val Williams is appointed as deputy editor, in charge of news, features and advertisements.

1996

Legal Action is completely redesigned, with grey, blue and red covers in rotation ... Expanded updater section includes parliamentary updater.

1997

Legal Action typesetting and page layout is brought in-house ... TM&D Press take over management of advertisements, in order to improve their coverage ... LAG and *Legal Action* celebrate their 25th year.

Louise ffoulkes and Jean Dyer reminisce at the LAG party



Stefano Cagnoni