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Lady Hazel Fox – BIICL Director 1982-1989

The first female Director of BIICL, Lady Hazel Fox, CMG QC, was appointed in 1982.

A leading expert on the law of state immunity (her current Chambers being 4-5 Grays Inn), she had been a Fellow and law lecturer at Somerville College, Oxford, since 1975.

“BIICL’s major assets at the time were the premises on Russell Square and the International and Comparative Law Quarterly (ICLQ), which was a highly respected journal and well known in the international legal world,” recalls Lady Fox. “But I saw that BIICL could - and should - be doing more than it was, so that became the focus of my directorship.”

She applied her characteristic energy and enthusiasm to the role, drawing on knowledge and teaching experience gained at Oxford and supported by a small, but willing team. She established groups on various issues in international law and began to run regular events, lectures and conferences. At the same time, she became active in the editorial of the ICLQ, working as General Editor with the assistant editor, Celia Hampton. And she oversaw a major appeal chaired by Sir Patrick Neill (a leading QC and Fellow of All Souls, later Lord Bladen) to put BIICL on a more stable financial footing.

“We ran regular evening panel sessions, from 5.30 to 8pm with a discussion and Q&A followed by drinks, as that format was the most popular,” says Lady Fox. “BIICL also initiated subject instruction sessions, which are now mostly done by the big solicitors’ firms – and those were also very successful.”

One group established during Lady Fox’s tenure was the Armed Conflict Group, chaired by Major-General Sir David Hughes Morgan. Sir David was famous for leading the prosecution in a prominent 1970s trial for attempted murder in Berlin, involving both Germany and Soviet Russia. One purpose of the group was to persuade the UK Government to ratify Protocols I and II of the Geneva Conventions which establish international law standards for humanitarian treatment in war – and it eventually did sign these in 1998. The group was also later involved in discussions of the legal ramifications of the Falklands War, relating to armed

conflict, naval warfare and international humanitarian law with Adam Roberts, Professor of International Relations, the Naval Judge Advocate at Greenwich and representatives of the International Red Cross (ICRC).

Some of the prominent lectures that BIICL was able to hold during Lady Fox's time drew on her contacts from the legal and academic world. One such lecturer was Sir Ian Brownlie, the leading international lawyer who appeared in over 40 contentious cases before the International Court of Justice.

"Most academics and lawyers were happy to lecture at BIICL for free, but I remember Professor Brownlie requested a fee," recalls Lady Fox with some amusement. "I'm sure that was because I was his former pupil. He spoke on an issue very much in the news at the time and still relevant today – the disputes over the continental shelf and the ratification of the UNCLOS 1982 Law of the Sea by members of the European Community."

Other topics covered by BIICL groups, lectures and conferences included British enactment of the Civil Jurisdiction and Judgments Convention 1982, minerals development in the Antarctica, treaty law (a series of lectures under the chairmanship of Professor Shabtai Rosenne), human rights and internal armed conflicts, Commonwealth affairs, European transport policy, cross-border insolvency and Lady Fox's own area of expertise, foreign sovereign immunity. Throughout her time at BIICL she had close relations with Sir Ian Sinclair and the subsequent Legal Advisers at the Foreign Office; and, through discussion and research during her time at BIICL, acquired the expertise which led to the publication by Oxford University Press of *Law of State Immunity* (now in 2015 in its 3rd edition).

1985 saw the establishment of a study group on the development of joint zones of offshore oil and carbon reserves, an issue which arose from the North Sea oil and gas fields that were shared by the UK with Norway and other countries. The group drafted and finally published a report on how such an arrangement can work, including the creation of legal agreements that enable two countries to share and tap the same reserves, (*Joint Development of offshore Oil and gas* vol 1 (1989), Vol 2 (1990)).

In 1989, Lady Fox handed over the reins to the leading Civil Liberties and Human Rights lawyer, Piers Gardner. She continued as General Editor of the ICLQ until 1998 and remains an active member of the Institute.

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