

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Many Law schools publish their own law journals. In the United Kingdom, these are often edited by faculty staff. At the University of Buckingham, the Law School staff edit and publish an annual journal – The Denning Law Journal (external link). It is named after the most famous and influential judicial figure of the century 20th Century, Lord Denning (1899 – 1999). He was a made a judge at 45 years of age and was promoted to the Court of Appeal [a mere] four years later. His judgments were always lucid. Simple words were the tools of his trade, communication and persuasion, in simple speech and not flamboyant gestures. In his book *The Discipline of Law* he said, “To succeed in the profession of the law, you must seek to cultivate command of language. Words are the lawyer’s tools of trade. When you are called upon to address a judge, it is your words which count most” (Butterworths 1979, p 5). He had a unique style of judgment writing, a master of evocative story telling. ‘It was bluebell time in Kent’ formed part of the opening of his judgment in a case of death and personal injury witnessed by Mrs Hinz (*Hinz v Berry* [1970] 2 QB 40). When he died in 1999 the then Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, said: “The name Denning was a byword for the law itself. His judgments were models of simple English which ordinary people understood.” He stood for the interests of fairness and justice.

Lord Denning was an enthusiastic supporter of the fledgling university at Buckingham. It seemed natural when the Journal was founded in 1986 to name it after him. We were greatly honoured when he consented to the use of his name.

When he celebrated his 100th birthday in January 1999, more than 170 lawyers and judges gathered at the University of Buckingham for the Denning Centenary Symposium.

The Denning Law Journal is a refereed journal. The aim is to provide a forum for the widest discussion of issues arising in the common law world and to embrace the wider global and international issues of contemporary concern, both of which Lord Denning would have approved. He also recognised the importance of:-

- developing the common law
- the need for judicial and community recognition of the urgency of reform and modernisation of law
- the need to preserve the traditions of judicial independence, integrity and creativity
- reflecting upon the interplay between law and morality
- the role to be played by the law in the defence of the individual in the modern state.

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As Lord Denning said, “If we never do anything which has not been done before, we shall never get anywhere. The law will stand still whilst the rest of the world goes on; and that will be bad for both” (*Packer v Packer* [1954] P. 15 at 22).

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Editor