Reflections On Legal Education

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Introduction

This special issue of The Newcastle Law Review is intended to evoke personal reflections on legal education. It must be acknowledged at once that I have never been a full-time undergraduate Law student, although I was an external student of the University of London, as explained below. My studies have always been contemporaneous with full-time employment.

Background

In 1957, when I began my life in the law, there was only one university law school in New South Wales: that at The University of Sydney. The first intake of undergraduate law students at The University of New South Wales was not to take place until 1971, while that at The University of Newcastle was not to occur until 1993.

In the late 1950s, most people outside the Sydney Metropolitan area aspiring to become solicitors (having being born and educated in Newcastle, I was one of them), served five years' articles of clerkship in a

* Federal Court of Australia, Sydney. I am thankful to Mr J R McKenzie, Barrister, Sydney, who was an articled clerk in Newcastle when I was, for his comments on a draft of this article. He has a remarkably good recollection of the circumstances and events of the times. His recollection extends to, but my thanks to him are not diminished by, the fact that he was part of a conspiracy of 'established' articled clerks to send a beginner (in this case, me) on a quest to solicitors' offices for 'verbal agreement forms' (see text).

local firm of solicitors, as part of a system administered by the Solicitors Admission Board ('SAB'), and sat for examinations as mentioned below. People, similarly placed, who wished to become barristers were not required to serve articles of clerkship, but were required to enrol as students-at-law with the Barristers Admission Board ('BAB') and also to sit for examinations as mentioned below.

It was for various reasons, mainly, but not entirely, financial ones, that most young people from outside the Sydney metropolitan area did not attempt to enrol in the Sydney Law School. Even if their son or daughter had a Commonwealth Scholarship, parents would have to pay about £6 of £7 per week for his or her board in Sydney. Most parents had no connection with a university or with a university-educated person (apart from the family doctor), and could not reasonably be expected to compare the educational merits of the University and the SAB or BAB systems. What if the parents had no relative or friend in Sydney willing, or in a position, to accommodate their child? What if, for any reason, the family became financially unable to support their son or daughter in Sydney during the course? In any event, did you really need a Law degree to practise as a country solicitor? In the light of such questions, it is understandable that most parents preferred the safe course of keeping their sixteen or seventeen year old son or daughter living at home, working locally for a modest income, and undertaking 'the solicitors' exams'. (Many young people in Sydney also qualified through the SAB and BAB systems rather than through the University of Sydney Law School, but these 'personal reflections' are written from a 'country' viewpoint.)

But for the SAB and BAB systems, I and many other young people similarly placed could not have become lawyers. The most famous lawyer to qualify through either the SAB or BAB system has surely been Justice Michael McHugh of the High Court of Australia. As is well known, his Honour was born and educated in Newcastle, worked as a clerk at the BHP, completed the BAB examinations, and practised for some two years, from March 1962 to June 1964, before relocating to the Sydney Bar.

The two Boards were composed of the judges of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, and, in the case of the SAB, two practising solicitors, and in the case of the BAB, two practising barristers. Admission to practise was then, as it is now, under the control of the Supreme Court. But articles of clerkship and approval of the clerk by the Prothonotary (in the SAB system), and admission as a student-at-law (in the case of the BAB system) (see below), have all long since disappeared in New South Wales.

Going From School To Work In A Solicitor's Office

Having completed high school in Newcastle at the end of 1956 at the age of 16 years and 9 months, I began working in the office of a Newcastle firm of solicitors in January 1957 about a month short of the age at which one was permitted to be articled. I was a clerk, but not yet an articled clerk. I spent my first two days sitting in the small office of a solicitor employed by the firm, observing and listening, but understanding nothing.

The maturity and sophistication which more established articled clerks in Newcastle in the late 1950s were able to affect was something to behold. As a beginner, I was most impressed. It was not just that they were so much older than I was (in fact some were even 22 years old!) but also that they were obviously so worldly-wise. They had their own offices and some of them smoked. Some would recline in their chairs, feet on desk, a posture that, particularly when accompanied by the exhalation of cigarette smoke, was, for me, a wonder to observe. They all knew about each other's progress, both in terms of practice and examinations. An articled clerk would say knowingly of another, 'his firm won't trust him with his own matters' or 'he hasn't passed *Equity* yet, you know' or 'he's still held up on *Torts*'. Even the office girls would whisper of a particular articled clerk, 'he's now handling his own matters'.

The word 'matter' prompts another reflection. I was surprised in my early days, to overhear that word used often in the office- 'who is handling the matter?' 'Would you please take over this matter?' 'He has too many matters.' It struck me as most unusual. I had never heard the word used at school or at home in this esoteric sense of a client's legal proceeding, transaction, dispute or other piece of legal business. And for the distant future were the subtle nuances of the term as used in Chapter III of the *Constitution.*

One of my earliest memorable experiences occurred not long after I began as a clerk in January 1957. The articled clerk two years ahead of me [First Articled Clerk] said to me, 'we are out of verbal agreement forms. Would you go to [Second Articled Clerk] at [First Firm] and ask him if he can give us half a dozen. Don't bother any of the partners there.' I went. Second Articled Clerk said to me, 'we are out of them too, I suggest you try [Third Articled Clerk] at [Second Firm]. Don't trouble the partners there.' I went again. For some reason that I can no longer remember, perhaps the kindness of Third Articled Clerk, my expedition did not go beyond him.

I think, and in any event want to believe, that the sending of beginners on errands to obtain verbal agreement forms or to borrow a copy of *Smith's Hypothetical Cases* was a common practice among articled clerks in Newcastle at the time.

The most curious feature of the story is that Second Articled Clerk now says that he recalls the incident well, asserts that he had not been

forewarned by First Articled Clerk, and claims that he would not have appreciated that a prank was being practised but for a slight raising of the eyebrow of his firm's receptionist when she ushered me into his office, saying 'this is Mr Lindgren who has just begun, and is after verbal agreement forms'! It is painful to hear Second Articled Clerk, a man now in his 60s, obviously stricken by guilt all these years, engaging in such feeble self-justification.

Even from a prank, one learns. I doubt that learning of that kind is possible in the more complex, pressured and controlled lives that beginning lawyers are forced by circumstances to lead today. Be this as it may, for an individual today, who, following six years of secondary school (in my time it was five years), undertakes say five years of full-time university studies before entering upon his or her first employment in the law at the age of say 23 or 24 years, to be subjected to such pranks, seems to be all but impossible. Everyone is too serious and too busy and the practice of law too impersonal, to accommodate such follies.

Becoming Articled

The expression 'articles of clerkship' was commonly used to refer not only to the document executed by the articled clerk, his or her guarantor, and the 'master solicitor', but also to the service provided by the clerk and the training and experience of legal practice provided by the solicitor. Rule 10 of the *Solicitors Admission Rules* provided that no person under 17 years of age could be articled with a view to his admission as a solicitor (I attained that age on 12 February 1957).

From a modern perspective, the Articles of Clerkship system appears a little quaint. Before the Articles of Clerkship were executed, the articled clerk was required to be introduced to the Prothonotary of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, at that time, Mr R E Walker, by the master solicitor or his Sydney agent. The introducer was required to produce 'satisfactory certificates by two prescribed persons relating to the fitness of [the] person to be admitted to articles, the intended articles unexecuted', and a certificate to the effect that the individual was entitled to be matriculated in the University of Sydney, the University of New South Wales or the University of New England (*Solicitors Admission Rules*, r 12).

In 1957, the age of majority in New South Wales was still 21 years. The tone of the character references and the terms of the Articles of Clerkship document (see below) confirm something referred to above, which is often overlooked, but is essential to a proper appreciation of these 'Reflections' – how young and inexperienced we were. We came straight from completing five years of secondary school education. We had not even attained the present age of majority (18 years). We

were of the age at which many high school students today undertake 'work experience'. The making of the arrangement for articles took place between the clerk's parents and the solicitor, and the clerk had no significant part in it at all.

My former headmaster certified on 20 February 1957:

> To whom it may concern
>
> I have with pleasure in stating that Kevin Lindgren, who was a student at this school from 1st year to Leaving Certificate 1956, is in my opinion, eminently suited to become apprenticed to Law.

The Honorary Secretary of my Church stated on 18 March 1957:

> This certifies that I have known Mr Kevin Lindgren of 1 Sparke Street Tighe's Hill all his life and hold him in the highest regard. He is a lad of excellent character, with a very nice personality and is of more than average intelligence. I have known his parents and grandparents for many years and they are all highly respected folk. I would think that Kevin is eminently suited to be articled to a Solicitor and wish him every success.

On 3 April 1957, the Sydney agents of my firm wrote to the firm by which I was still employed as a clerk:

> The earliest date for introduction to the Prothonotary is 2:00pm on Tuesday, April 9, 1957, and we have arranged an appointment for this time.
>
> We suggest that Mr Lindgren contact the writer upon his arrival in Sydney in order that we may complete arrangements.

The terms of the Articles of Clerkship also strike the modern mind as a little otherworldly. My Articles of Clerkship were dated 8 April 1957 and were expressed to operate for five years from their date ('from the date of these presents'). It therefore appears that r 12 (referred to above), was not complied with, in that I became articled before receiving the Prothonotary's approval. Is there an explanation? Perhaps, notwithstanding the letter, an appointment earlier than 8 April 1957 was obtained. Perhaps the document was not executed until after my introduction to the Prothonotary, and my master solicitor wrongly inserted 8 April 1957 as its date. I do not recall the Prothonotary remonstrating that the document had already been executed, in disconformity with r 12. I think I would have remembered that happening, because I do recall his observation that the honorary secretary of a church was not a 'prescribed person' for the purposes of that rule ('a minister of religion ordinarily officiating as such who has been registered for the celebration of marriages' was a prescribed person, but the minister of my Church was on vacation or, for some other reason, unavailable at the time) – but that is another matter.

The Articles of Clerkship were required to be filed in the Court within one month of the date on which they were executed, consistently with the Court's control over the system leading to the admission of solicitors.

Clause 3 of my Articles of Clerkship, in 32 lines, set out the covenants of the Guarantor (my father) with the Solicitor, and cl 4, in 19 lines, set out the Solicitor's covenants with the Guarantor and with me, while cl 2 stated in only four and a half lines:

> The Clerk of his own free will and with the consent of his father the Guarantor binds himself as Clerk to the Solicitor for the said term truly honestly and diligently to serve the Solicitor at all times during the said terms as a faithful clerk should do.

Clause 5, however, was a covenant by me not to practise as a Solicitor, Attorney or Proctor 'at Newcastle... or within ten miles thereof' for three years following the five years of the Articles of Clerkship period. This is not the place to discuss the enforceability of this restraint of trade. By cl 6, I undertook that upon attaining the age of 21 years, I would 'confirm these articles, and... sign and execute an engrossment thereof containing similar terms and conditions to the terms hereof.' Clause 7 was an indemnity by the Guarantor, which included a covenant to pay to the Solicitor £1000 if I breached cl 5.

The Prothonotary signed the certificate endorsed on my Articles of Clerkship, and I began life as an articled clerk. The first significant event to befall me as an articled clerk was that my salary fell from whatever it had been during the three months or so for which I had been a clerk down to £2.10.0 per week. Happily, however, this was exactly twice the amount (£1.5.0) that had been paid to the articled clerk who had commenced with the same firm the preceding year. Living with my parents and riding a bicycle to and from the office kept my living expenses low. A few decades earlier, the parents of the articled clerk had to pay the solicitor for 'taking on' their son or daughter (throughout the five year period of my articles, there was only one female articled clerk in Newcastle – she smoked cigars too!). In *David Copperfield*, Dickens relates that it cost David's aunt £1000 to article him to the proctors, Spenlow and Jorkins, that he was without salary, and that his aunt paid him 'ninety pounds a year (exclusive of house-rent and sundry collateral matters)'.[1]

The Training And Experience Provided By Master Solicitors To Their Articled Clerks

There was no control over the quality of practical training experienced by articled clerks, and the quality varied enormously as between firms and as between individual master solicitors. Fortunately for me, my firm had a comparatively large general practice, and represented many plaintiffs suing for damages for personal injuries. I derived enormous benefit from working with leading senior and junior counsel from the

1 Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* (Everyman's Library ed, 1991) 386.

Sydney Bar who would come to Newcastle on briefs from my firm in such cases. The claims arose out of road and industrial accidents, and were heard by juries of four in the Newcastle circuit sittings of the Supreme Court. Those counsel included some famous names: Athol Moffitt QC, Harold Glass QC, Andrew Rogers and Colin Allen (both later silks) – all of them later judges. I also came to do nearly all the opinion work for the Newcastle City Council – work that I found varied and stimulating.

Unsatisfactory aspects of the practical training provided under articles of clerkship ultimately led to their abandonment in favour of the establishment of the College of Law and the institutionalised provision of practical training there as from 1 January 1975. A particular complaint made about articles was that articled clerks were used as cheap labour to perform routine menial clerical work. This included the lodgement of documents at government offices, such as the Stamp Duties Office, and the delivery of urgent communications between firms (the era of the facsimile machine and the Document Exchange, let alone the email, had not yet arrived – nor had the photocopier, although we had Gestetner machines and spirit duplicators).

No doubt, the complaint over the inadequacy of the régime of training provided under articles of clerkship was justified. However, having regard to our youthfulness, general unawareness of the world (television arrived in Australia in 1956, and it was some time before my family, like many others, bought a television set), and, dare I say, naivety, I think there was some utility in spending the early period of one's articles of clerkship engaged in such tasks. We were commencing, after all, office work at an age a little below that at which most young people complete their secondary education today. The real problem was that the system did not ensure that the solicitors provided a satisfactory range of experience and practical training over the five-year period – a problem that had no obvious solution in the case of a firm with a very limited practice.

The Examinations

I turn now to the examinations which articled clerks were required to pass.

A Barristers and Solicitors Joint Examination Board ('JEB') was constituted under the *Barristers and Solicitors Joint Examinations Board Rules*. Its role was, subject to any directions of the BAB or SAB, to examine and assess the academic progress of articled clerks and students-at-law. The JEB comprised two judges, two solicitors, the Challis Professor of Law in the University of Sydney, and one other full-time teacher of law in the Law School of that University nominated by that Professor of Law.

The examination subjects were prescribed for articled clerks by

the *Solicitors Admission Rules* and for students-at-law by the *Barristers Admission Rules,* and the prescribed books and other material on which a candidate was to be examined were set out in a schedule to those respective Rules. In both cases, all subjects were mandatory – there were no electives.

Under the *Solicitors Admission Rules,* the first examination was called, appropriately, 'The First Law Examination'. It comprised 'Paper A' of two hours on the Australian Legal System and Constitutional Law, and 'Paper B', also of two hours, on legal history. The second was called 'The Intermediate Law Examination', and comprised one three-hour paper on particular specified topics of the Law of Contract and general aspects of Land Law. The third examination was called 'The Final Law Examination'. This could be considered a misnomer because it comprised, in fact, seven examinations called 'Sections' as follows:

Section 1	Paper A (3 hours) Paper B (2 hours)	Real and personal property The remainder of the Law of Contract
Section 2	Paper A (3 hours) Paper B (2 hours)	Equity and trusts Wills, executors and administrators, probate, and the administration of estates.
Section 3	One paper (3 hours)	Conveyancing and legal interpretation
Section 4	Paper A (3 hours) Paper B (3 hours)	Mercantile law and bankruptcy Company law and partnership
Section 5	Paper A (3 hours) Paper B (2 hours)	Torts Criminal law and practice
Section 6	Paper A (2 hours) Paper B (3 hours)	Divorce Procedure and Evidence
Section 7	One paper (2 hours)	Legal Practitioners – Ethics, Accounts and Practices.

The *Barristers Admission Rules* required a student-at-law to pass examinations in the following subjects:

First Examination
Constitutional Law
Roman Law
Contracts and Mercantile Law

Second Examination
Property
Torts and Crimes
Legal Interpretation
Legal History

Third Examination
Equity and Company Law, including Practice
Bankruptcy and Probate, including Practice
Lunacy, Law of Domestic Relations and Divorce, including Practice

Fourth Examination
Conveyancing
Procedure
Pleading and Evidence
Private International Law

It will be noted that Roman Law and Pleading did not form part of the examinations for articled clerks, while 'Legal Practitioners – Ethics, Accounts and Practices' did not feature in those prescribed for students-at-law. However, sub–r 21(2) of the *Barristers Admission Rules* provided:

> Students-at-law shall read *Conduct of the Legal Profession in New South Wales* by Teece and Harrison, and, when giving notice of their intention to present themselves for the Fourth Examination, shall lodge with the Secretary a statement in writing that they have carefully read such book.

An articled clerk (who was not a university graduate) could sit for the first law examination not earlier than six months after the date of the articles of clerkship, and in the case of subsequent examinations, not earlier than six months after first presenting for the immediately preceding examination, with the exception that the period was nine months in the case of the interval between the Intermediate Law Examination and Section 1 of the Final Law Examination. The examination sessions were held every three months, and if you had a failure, you could elect to re-sit the examination in the failed subject at the next examination session three months later, and if you failed it again, three months later, and so on, in an attempt to 'catch up'. If you had no failures, or had 'caught up' on any that you had had, you could complete all the examinations in four years and nine months – a little before the expiry of the five-year articles of clerkship.

There was no tuition whatever for the examinations, and there were no assignments or essays, for example. There was a high failure rate. For any particular subject, articled clerks like myself would obtain a copy of the Sydney University Law School Notes (which were prescribed), the prescribed textbook or textbooks, any prescribed statutes, and, most importantly, copies of past examination papers. As far as case law was concerned, your position depended on the quality of your firm's library – again, something that varied greatly as between firms. Some articled law clerks in Newcastle would study in collaboration, but, generally speaking, each of us was totally alone.

The Second Schedule to the *Solicitors Admission Rules* commenced

ominously:

Where Acts or Rules are prescribed or referred to, they are to be read as amended by subsequent Acts or Rules, and where text books or University Law School Notes are prescribed or referred to, it is intended that the latest edition of such text books or Notes should be used.

Candidates are reminded that they are liable to be examined in any Acts or Rules relating to the subjects of these examinations passed or made by either the State or the Federal Parliament more than six calendar months prior to the date at which such examinations may be held.

There were few Australian legal texts – nearly all were English. That prescribed for the two papers on the Law of Contract, for example, was *Anson's Law of Contract* (the 20th edition was published in 1952, and the 21st in 1959). On the basis of the Law School Notes and the Australian statutes, you had to make mental adjustments as you read the English textbooks. In fact, the *Solicitors Admission Rules* stated in this respect (Second Schedule, 11. The Intermediate Law Examination, notes (1) and (2)):

1. Students are reminded that Hargreaves, "Introduction to the Land Law" is concerned with the law of England. Many of the provisions of the English statutes passed since 25th August, 1828, and referred to in this book, have been adopted by or repealed in local legislation, but many have not, and in particular the general reforms contained in the English property legislation of 1925 have not been copied here. The book is to be read primarily as an introduction to the provisions of the Conveyancing Act and the Real Property Act.

2. Students are also reminded that Anson, "Law of Contract" is concerned with the law of England and some of the statutory provisions referred to therein differ from those in force in New South Wales. Generally, students should check the applicability in New South Wales of the statutes mentioned and should note, in particular, the following matters: (a) In reference to the contracts required to be evidenced in writing under to the 19th and 20th editions of Anson, since English amendments in 1954, have not been adopted in New South Wales; (b) the English Infants' Relief Act, 1874, has not been adopted in New South Wales; and (c) the special provisions of the New South Wales Gaming and Betting Act, 1912 (as amended), in relation to betting with infants, should be referred to.

For the Intermediate Law Examination, numerous specified sections

of the *Real Property Act 1900* (NSW) and of the *Conveyancing Act 1919* (NSW) were included in the prescribed 'books or other material on which the examinations [were to] be conducted' (*Solicitors Admission Rules*, r 24(1)).

With great respect to the author of the relevant Law School Notes, it was difficult to understand, or to be confident that you understood, Australian Constitutional Law, when there was no tuition and the material prescribed for study (by the Second Schedule to the *Solicitors Admission Rules*) was stated simply as follows:

1. Wade & Phillips, "Constitutional Law" (4th Edition) omitting Parts VI & XI.
2. Geldart, "Elements of English Law" (1939) (3rd edition by Sir Wm. Holdsworth, or later edition).
3. The Notes of the University Law School on Constitutional Law (General).

NOTE – Students should refer to the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act.

Frederick Alexander James was the unwitting torturer of many an articled clerk placed as I was. Trying, with no guidance except that to be found in the Sydney University Law School Notes, to understand s 92 of the *Constitution* by studying the successive proceedings brought by him[2] was a well accepted cause of recurrent panic attacks in seventeen year old articled clerks of the time.

In the total absence of tuition and of assignments, essays or other exercises, we did not know *how* to go about studying law. In particular, we did not know what was more important, and what was less unimportant. For example, for my first examination, I thought I might earn marks if I could reproduce the citations to what seemed to me to be the most important cases, so I tried to memorise them.

I recall, as a junior articled clerk, trying to reconcile the use of that chameleon expression 'common law' in the text books with the use of it in the office ('Common Law List', 'common law case', etc). The only person who gave me any time on the question was one of the firm's two managing law clerks.

Just as there had been no tuition prior to the examination, there was no feedback after it. The results were posted on a notice board at the Supreme Court in Sydney. Newcastle articled clerks who had sat would arrange to meet in the office of one of their number on the day on which the results were posted. That clerk would have supplied to the Sydney agents of his or her firm, a list of the names of the Newcastle articled

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2 See *James v Commonwealth* (1928) 41 CLR 442, (1936) 55 CLR 1, (1939) 62 CLR 339; and *James v Cowan* (1930) 43 CLR 386, (1932) 47 CLR 386.

clerks who had sat, and an employee of the Sydney agent's firm (no doubt another articled clerk), would attend at the Supreme Court and copy the results from those posted up. The Newcastle articled clerks who had sat would meet at the office of their colleague at the appointed time when the results would be relayed over the telephone, to the joy or disappointment of each individual present.

The results were graded as 'satisfactory' or 'very satisfactory' (I understand that the discrimen was a mark of 75 percent). There was no 'fail' result, a failure being indicated simply by the omission of the particular articled clerk's name from the list posted up. If, as sometimes happened, the person transcribing the results from the Supreme Court notice board omitted, for some reason, to record a particular candidate's posted results, someone at the Newcastle end would be caused much anxiety until the error was revealed.

The examiners had no hesitation in failing candidates. It was reputed that one of Newcastle's most senior solicitors had passed one of the examinations only on the thirteenth attempt. The story was a source of amusement and fear for articled clerks who were currently immersed in the system.

As articled clerks undertaking the examinations, we were not part of a tertiary institution of any kind. Rather, we were just a multitude of individuals. But the Incorporated Law Institute in New South Wales, the predecessor of the Law Society of New South Wales, did provide a prize for the best performance in the State over the seven sections of the Final Law Examination. At our respective times, Newcastle articled clerks Douglas Potts, Brian Sharpe and I were fortunate enough to win that prize.

Shortcomings And Benefits

The private study system for articled clerks of the late 1950s and early 1960s that I have described was, as a system of legal eduction, almost totally unsatisfactory, but there were some benefits. It forced you to draw on your own resources. Without anyone to turn to, you simply had to work out answers to legal questions for yourself. A similar position prevailed in the office. The articled clerk was not spoon-fed by his or her firm. On the contrary, and I think this was generally true, you learned by being 'thrown in at the deep end'. You quickly matured and learned to accept responsibility. There were articled clerks like me who responded positively to the challenge posed by the SAB system, but, sadly, others did not, and had to persuade their master solicitor to release them from their articles.

While the lack of guidance and support, in both the academic and professional practice contexts, was definitely a very serious

shortcoming, I suggest that resourcefulness is a desirable quality of Law undergraduates as for others, and that they are not well served if presented with everything on a plate.

Another benefit was that you knew that your studies were 'relevant' – not so much relevant to a current issue in the office, but relevant in a more general way. You were working in a solicitor's office, involved in the practice of law every day, and knew that you would eventually practise as a solicitor, either with the firm with which you served your articles or with another firm, provided only you passed the examinations. There was no question of being unable to find employment as a solicitor in due course.

Subsequent Events – I Become A Law Undergraduate

I was admitted as a solicitor on 4 May 1962, and became a partner in the firm as from 1 July 1962 – both at the age of twenty-two years. By today's standards, that was a young age for both events, and is explicable by reference to one's young age at commencement, and by the fact that the firm had had five years in which to get to know you and to observe your performance. As well, there was no shortage of work for solicitors.

Contemporaneously with the SAB course, I completed a Bachelor of Arts degree as a part time (evening) student at what was then the Newcastle University College of the University of New South Wales. The significance of this is that it qualified me next (while a solicitor and partner), to undertake, again by private study and without tuition, an LLB degree as an external student of the University of London. That made me a Law undergraduate, but one who never attended university for a Law lecture.

For the LLB degree, there were no 'credits' for subjects previously passed as part of the SAB course. Indeed, my having successfully completed that course and been admitted as a solicitor was not the basis on which I was permitted to enrol for the LLB degree. Rather, as noted above, it was that I had graduated in Arts from the University of New South Wales.

For the LLB degree, there were four examination papers every six months, again held in Sydney, but this time over only three years (12 papers). Again, there was no tuition or post-examination feedback. The University of London supplied an outline of the material to be covered for a subject and specified a textbook or textbooks. This time, there were no Law School Notes, but at least the books related to the body of law on which I was to be examined.

Having completed the SAB examinations, I found the University of London LLB examinations in the same or similar subjects, easier than

would otherwise have been the case (perhaps I was further aided by having studied English textbooks in the SAB course). But some subjects, such as Roman Law and Jurisprudence, were new to me.

I suggest that this benefit of finding a subject easier the second time round, rather than being credited towards a further degree with a subject previously passed, is a sufficient benefit to take from the earlier studies. It is not wasteful and is no great hardship to study the same subject twice. 'If a subject is worth studying, it is worth studying twice'! One's understanding of the subject is likely to be much greater by reason of the refreshment of the earlier learning and the 'filling out' that takes place the second time round. Perhaps because of my own experience, I have never found it easy to accept that a person who has already been awarded a degree based on one set of subjects, and who wishes to undertake a second degree, should be credited towards the latter with subjects that went towards the former.

Conclusion

As asked, I have given 'personal reflections' above. I hope that they will not read as an exercise in nostalgic self-indulgence, and that some of them may even be of interest to one or two people beyond the circle of my Newcastle contemporaries of the late 1950s and early 1960s.