

Barnsley's Conveyancing Law and Practice

Second edition

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Preface to the Second Edition

'Beginnings are such hard times'

I have not had to face the awesome task of creating a new work; not only have I had the benefit of an existing text of undoubted quality but I have also had the benefit of Professor Barnsley's work on large parts of the text. It was always his intention to undertake the revision of this new edition but he found himself unable to complete the task. I have incorporated almost all his work, which is to be found in Part II and to a lesser extent in Parts III and IV, into this edition. The responsibility for the final version, however, remains mine.

The sections that needed most updating and rewriting were those dealing with Registration of Title and the Contract Stage. To a lesser extent Remedies (Part VI) have also required careful attention. Professor Barnsley, like many another, was a supporter of 'the Cyprian Williams Heresy'. This edition exceeds the last one in extent by approximately fifty pages, reflecting Professor Barnsley's substantial revision of Parts II, III and IV, which have been largely rewritten in the light of the new case law in that area since the last edition. I have added, as an extra appendix, The Law Society Conditions of Sale (1980 Revision). The latest edition of the National Conditions of Sale, which attempts to deal with the decision in *Walker v Boyle*, appeared after the manuscript was delivered and has been incorporated at proof stage. The reader now, therefore, has the text of the general conditions of both the standard forms to hand and I am grateful to The Law Society and the Solicitors' Law Stationery Society Limited for their permission to reproduce them.

I am grateful to Stephen Sauvain, Barrister, who lent his expertise to the chapter on Planning. I should like, too, to thank Professor Barnsley for his contribution. In addition to his work on revising the text he has read the proofs and suggested many stylistic and other improvements which I have been able to incorporate into the text.

On a personal note I will always be grateful to 'P.B.F.' who set me on my way; to the one and only Joe Turner who corrected my course at a very vital stage; and to my wife, Diane, who has tolerated the use of our home as a repository for notes, books, mounted sheets and all the other matters relevant to a task such as this.

I am grateful to the editorial staff of Butterworths for the care and attention they have given me (especially with regard to handwriting!).

vi **Preface to the Second Edition**

The law is generally that as at 1 October 1981 although a number of subsequent developments have been incorporated in the text and footnotes.

Lady Day 1982

P.W.S.
Manchester.

Preface to the First Edition

*'Of making many books there is no end; and
much study is a weariness of the flesh.'*

(Ecclesiastes, Chap. XII, v. 12)

The opening part of this quotation could well be taken as an apt description of the steady stream of new law books currently flowing from the printer's press. Nevertheless I make no apology for adding to this number, for I have long felt there to be a need for a book which explains the mysteries of conveyancing, especially to students who may never have seen the inside of a solicitor's office. At a time when the solicitor's monopoly in conveyancing is being challenged, it is imperative that the aspiring conveyancer is thoroughly versed in the law and practice of his calling. The practical skills, including the art of drafting documents, he can acquire in the office, but he must generally look elsewhere for an understanding of the underlying legal rules and principles. This book, which attempts to discuss the principles of conveyancing in a practical setting, has been written primarily for the undergraduate and the articled clerk, although I cherish the fond hope that the book may be of some value to the qualified practitioner. Suggestions are sometimes made (by the uninformed) that conveyancing requires no special skills or knowledge. The pages of this book should go some way towards demonstrating the falsity of such notions.

I have sought to deal with matters chronologically as they are likely to arise in a normal conveyancing transaction, whether the title to the land is registered or unregistered. Two comments should, perhaps, be made. First, I have departed from this order in one important respect. The drafting of the conveyance (or transfer) must necessarily precede the completion of the transaction. However, it seemed to me to be desirable to have a separate section relating to conveyancing documents, rather than to attempt to slot this important subject into its correct chronological sequence. Secondly, the spread of registration of title renders it necessary to consider in detail the general principles of land registration at an early stage of the book, thus facilitating the consideration of various aspects of registered conveyancing in the subsequent pages. It is to be regretted that registration of title is not a topic which receives satisfactory treatment in real property text books, and the majority of land law courses pay but scant attention to the system. Needless to say, the solicitor of tomorrow requires a thorough understanding of the operation of the Land Registration Act 1925. Unfortunately, the need to consider two separate systems of land transfer has added considerably to the size of the book.

I have assumed that the reader has a basic knowledge of the principles of real property, equity and contract, and in the main I have refrained from covering ground that is adequately dealt with by the standard land law text books. Some overlap has been unavoidable.

Every solicitor involved in a conveyancing transaction should be familiar with the Conditions of Sale regulating the contract of sale. I have, therefore, sought to give due prominence to the terms of the National Conditions of Sale and The Law Society's Conditions of Sale. Partly because of personal preference, partly out of a desire not to confuse the reader unnecessarily, I have concentrated upon the National Conditions of Sale, though in no sense have I attempted to write a commentary on these Conditions. I should like to thank Oyez Publishing Limited, the copyright owners of the National Conditions of Sale, for allowing me to reproduce the front page of their contract form and the Conditions of Sale. I am also grateful to The Law Society for granting permission to quote extracts from their Conditions of Sale.

A wind of change is now blowing over the conveyancing scene, heralding future reforms. The Law Commission are currently looking at various topics in an attempt to simplify the transfer of land. As yet, few of their recommendations have reached the statute book, but the next decade may well see the enactment of several important changes. I have sought to draw the reader's attention to the Commission's tentative proposals, where matters are still under review, though much of the information has, perforce, been relegated to the foot-notes.

I am deeply indebted to my friend and former colleague, Professor M. J. Goodman, who has read the whole of the manuscript; his invaluable comments have saved me from many mistakes. For such errors, inconsistencies and imperfections that remain, I alone am responsible. Thanks are also due to Mr Simon Palk who has kindly read the proofs, to Mrs Barbara Abram and to my wife, both of whom rendered sterling assistance with the typing, and, by no means least, to the publishers who have so patiently endured my dilatory ways.

I have endeavoured to state the law in accordance with the material at my disposal on 30 September 1972. It has been possible, when correcting the proofs, to take account of a number of subsequent developments, mainly in the footnotes.

Finally, I should like to express the hope that, despite the length of this book, those who study its pages will not be afflicted by that 'weariness of the flesh' which seems to have plagued the Preacher of old.

D.G.B.

January 1973

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