

**STREET
ON
TORTS**

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THE
LAW OF TORTS |

by

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PREFACE

In the 30 years I have been concerned with the preparation of this book no edition has needed so many changes as this one. The courts have made radical alterations (mostly for the better) in the law of negligence. Over the whole field of tort the annual incidence of reported decisions has been well above the 20th century average. Parliament, too, has been exceptionally active. The Torts (Interference with Goods) Act, the Limitation Act, the Employment Acts and the Administration of Justice Act have all necessitated extensive re-writing. Other tort text book editors are content to paraphrase new Acts. I have followed my usual policy of trying both to assess their meaning and to write a critique. I have also introduced new chapters. So much has happened in the courts on Damages since I wrote the first English law monograph on it over 20 years ago that I have now recognised its practical importance by writing a separate chapter.

It is desirable to see how tort links up with insurance and social security as a compensation mechanism, and how techniques of loss spreading, and shifting costs are being evolved. I thought that I should no longer fail to utilise my twenty-odd years experience as a chairman of a local national insurance tribunal and I have therefore added a second new chapter on this topic.

I have considered carefully whether to write on economic tort theory. Its inclusion would be justified only if it affected judicial thinking or made tort easier for students to grasp. The English bench has no equivalent to American judges like Traynor J. who cast themselves in a regulatory role. There is no judicial involvement in economic theory here. Maybe our judges are not interested in Posner and Calabresi because they realise that tort cases usually involve random interactions between strangers rather than planned interaction between persons with exchange mechanisms. I conclude that a student will not understand the English law of torts the better by mastering the writings of these economists.

After all the re-writing I was pleasantly surprised to find that the book is one page shorter than the previous edition.

I have endeavoured to state the law in accordance with the sources available to me in January 1983.

February 1983

HARRY STREET

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