

JACKSON'S
**MATRIMONIAL
FINANCE AND
TAXATION**

THIRD EDITION

By

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**MATRIMONIAL FINANCE
AND TAXATION**

Preface

Since the publication of the last edition of this work, there have been considerable changes in the law and practice concerning matrimonial finance and taxation.

The House of Lords in *Minton v Minton* has enunciated the principle of the 'clean break': 'The law now encourages spouses to avoid bitterness after family break-down and to settle their money and property problems. An object of the modern law is to encourage each to put the past behind them and to begin a new life which is not overshadowed by the relationship which has broken down. It would be inconsistent with this principle if the court could not make, as between the spouses, a genuinely final order unless it was prepared to dismiss the application... The difference between a dismissal of an application by consent upon terms recited or referred to in the order... and an order whose terms incorporate the parties' agreement is a mere formality. The substance of the transaction in each case is a final settlement, as between the parties, approved by the court.'

The latest decision in the Court of Appeal is that there cannot be a dismissal of a party's claim without that spouse's consent, but other views are to be found in decisions of that Court and elsewhere.

The position as to children is different, as was pointed out by the Privy Council in *de Lasala v de Lasala*: their applications can be made from time to time (assuming that dismissal of a child's claim is permissible).

The House of Lords in *Hanlon v The Law Society* has also considered the effect in legal aid cases of the Law Society's charge on property recovered or preserved in applications for financial relief. The case underlines the fact that to win is not enough: if costs are not recovered from the other side, the property recovered or preserved will be diminished (save for the first £2,500) by reason of the charge, although there is a discretion to postpone its exercise, and moreover the Law Society may permit the transfer of the charge from one property to another.

We have added a Chapter on State and other benefits. This is intended as a brief indication of what benefits are available in respect of both adults and children. These benefits are particularly valuable in the case of single-parent families. We are grateful to Miss Anna Pauffley, barrister, and also to Mr. David McIntyre, barrister, for assistance in preparing this Chapter.

The most interesting change in tax structure would appear to be the abolition of the imposition of investment income surcharge in relation to periodical payments made under orders and agreements. Attention is also drawn to the new form of order in relation to school fees.

The Court of Appeal in *W v W* (1980) 124 Sol Jo 397, has decided that there is no power to order a person who is not a party to the financial suit to depose to an affidavit of means, although the rule as at present constituted permits the court to make orders as to persons who are not parties for their attendance at court to be examined or cross-examined.

Inevitably the work has grown in size, though we have pruned where reasonably possible. Statutes and case law are abundant in this sphere, and possible changes in the law are currently matters of public discussion. We have done our best to state the law as it is at 1 July 1980.

JOSEPH JACKSON
DAVID DAVIES

July 1980

Extract from Preface to First Edition

Divorce has become less about divorce and more about money. The process by which a divorce is obtained has become increasingly less significant. The parties now wage their warfare on the battlefield of finance. The present writer has long thought that, as a general comment, too little attention has been given to matrimonial financial matters. All too often the processes by which financial orders and agreements are reached are hit-and-miss, haphazard affairs. The number of persons involved in matrimonial financial disputes is enormous. In 1971 there may have been something approaching 100,000 divorce petitions. If one considers the adults and the children concerned in these cases, one can soon see that the annual output of individuals involved is certainly more than 300,000, and in addition there were many thousands of applications for matrimonial orders in magistrates' courts. Statistics are available about the husbands and wives who litigate about their matrimonial troubles, but no doubt there was also in the same year a not inconsiderable number of married people who parted without litigation, having in many cases come to private financial arrangements.

This book is about money, about the economics of matrimonial breakdown in all its many aspects. It is a new book intended for all those concerned with matrimonial finance and taxation, and in particular it is concerned with the principles applied by the courts in considering these matters. The book deals not only with the making of orders and agreements, but also with the effect of these orders and agreements, for it is still a sad fact that many parties leave court completely unaware as to the precise effect upon them of the order made by the court. The same observation applies in relation to agreements reached between the parties. Both the payer and the payee should be aware as to the real meaning of the order or agreement.

There is insufficient recourse to the accountant who has an important role to perform in this sphere. There is insufficient knowledge of the principles to be applied. It is, for example, still a common fallacy among many lawyers and accountants that the fact that accounts have been disclosed to and accepted by the Revenue is conclusive as against a wife in matrimonial disputes.

The importance of attempting to achieve the 'right' order cannot be over-emphasised. It is true that the amount to be awarded is discretionary, and that different minds reasonably differ as to how the discretion should be exercised. Even so, as the late Lord Donovan said in one case [*Irvine v Irvine* (1963) 107 Sol Jo 213, CA], one is moving in a field where it is possible in many cases to achieve

considerable accuracy. This is because one can accurately estimate the question of living expenses within the ambit of a particular standard of living. One must also bear in mind that a small amount might make a material difference to a woman who has to support herself and her children. An error may produce hardship to the payee or to the payer.

January 1972.

JOSEPH JACKSON

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