

THE LAW OF
TORT

Second Edition

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The Law of Tort

Second Edition

Series editor

Andrew Grubb MA (Cantab), LLD (Lond), FMedSci

Senior Immigration Judge, Asylum and Immigration Tribunal; Visiting Professor of Law, Cardiff Law School, Cardiff University

General editor

Ken Oliphant BA (Oxon), BCL
City Solicitors Educational Trust Reader in Tort, University of Bristol

Contributors

Roderick Bagshaw MA (Oxon), BCL

Fellow in Law, Magdalen College, Oxford

David Burnet BA (Oxon), LLM Wales

Lecturer, Cardiff Law School, Cardiff University

Paula Giliker MA (Oxon), BCL, PhD

Reader in Law, University of Bristol

Vivienne Harpwood LLB, Barrister

Professor, Cardiff Law School, Cardiff University

Steve Hedley MA (Oxon), LLB (Cantab), BSc (Open), Barrister

Professor of Law, University College, Cork

David Howarth MA (Cantab), LLM (Yale), MPhil (Yale)

Member of Parliament, House of Commons; Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge

Mark Lunney BA, LLB (Qld) LLM (Cantab), Solicitor, Supreme Court of Queensland and Supreme Court of England & Wales

Associate Professor of Law, University of New England

Paul Mitchell BA (Oxon), DPhil

Reader in Law, King's College London

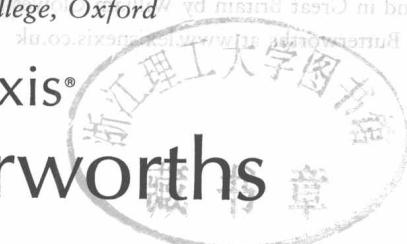
Alastair Mullis LLB (Lond), LLM (Cantab)

Professor of Law, University of East Anglia

Donal Nolan MA (Oxon), BCL

Fellow in Law, Worcester College, Oxford

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Series Preface

The common law is justifiably seen as a jewel in the crown of English law. The common law has travelled far afield to many other countries where it has been adopted and developed by the local courts. No longer the sole preserve of the judges in London (or Edinburgh and Cardiff), its durability and richness has been due in no small way to the diversity of approach that exists between the common law countries throughout the world. Many of the great judges in England, such as Coke, Mansfield, Blackburn, Atkin, Devlin, Reid and Denning, and those from overseas such as Oliver Wendell Holmes, Benjamin Cardozo and Owen Dixon, have been masters of the common law. As we enter the new Millennium, the common law continues to influence the development of law elsewhere. It will remain a major export, but now also an import, of this country.

Butterworths Common Law Series conceives of the common law in broad terms, providing analyses of the principles informing the frameworks of the law derived from judicial decisions and legislation. The *Series* seeks to provide authoritative accounts of the common law for legal practitioners, judges and academics. While providing a clear and authoritative exposition of the existing law, the *Series* also aims to identify and examine potential developments in the common law drawing on important and significant jurisprudence from other common law jurisdictions. Judges have increasingly looked to academic works for guidance on the accepted view of the law but also when contemplating a reformulation or change of direction in the law. The *Series* may, it is hoped, provide some assistance such that the law is less likely to be left undeveloped ‘marching ... in the rear limping a little’, to quote a famous judicial aphorism (*Mount Isa Mines v Pusey* (1970) per Windeyer J).

Andrew Grubb

Foreword

By the Right Honourable Lord Justice Pill

In his Preface to the first volume in *Butterworths Common Law Series*, that on the Law of Contract, Lord Steyn commented that in the law of obligations, it was upon the boundaries of the law of contract that the spaces left for the law of tort (and the law of restitution) depended. The space left for that residual category of liability is, I am sure he would agree, a very large one and this volume on the Law of Tort fills a considerable space in a way which I strongly commend.

The work achieves its aim of providing an in-depth analysis of the modern law. It is comprehensive and practical. It contains that degree of detail now required in a general work by practitioners dealing with the wide range of problems they can expect to encounter. The complexity of the social context in which the law works is kept well in mind. The work achieves its further aim of identifying and encouraging the reader to identify potential developments in the law, encouragement which begins in the first chapter with its valuable analysis of the nature of tortious liability.

Within individual chapters, care has been taken to divide the subject into manageable sections. The section headings are well chosen as signposts for practitioners to the issues likely to arise upon a set of facts presented to them. Footnotes provide of course the authority relied on but also provide signposts to further thought and study, both in the cases and in academic works.

It is no surprise that topics such as product liability and government liability achieve separate attention in chapters of their own but the importance of incorporating detailed rules within the fabric of the general law is well recognised in the text. Links between the law of torts and other branches of the law are also explored.

I consider the publication of this work in the Butterworths series to be a valuable new contribution to the literature and understanding of the law. This is a space filled in a way which will in my view be of great assistance to practitioners, judges, academic lawyers and students.

Malcolm Pill

12 November 2001

Preface to the Second Edition

It is a great honour, as well as being a considerable challenge, to be invited to replace Andrew Grubb as editor of this title in the *Butterworths Common Law Series*. For many of us, Andrew has been a valued colleague and friend for a considerable period of time, and I am sure the other contributors would wish to join me in thanking him for his generous support and inspiration over the years.

For this edition, I am delighted to welcome two new names to the list of contributors, Paula Giliker and Roderick Bagshaw. There are also two wholly new chapters: 'Privacy' (Bagshaw) and 'Deceit and Misrepresentation' (Mitchell).

I must record my grateful thanks to Charles Mitchell of King's College London, for advice and assistance in the editorial process, as well as to Evelyn Reid and Elaine Pugh of LexisNexis Butterworths. Evelyn had to dig deep into her reserves of patience and perseverance to keep things moving forward during the protracted authoring period, and I hope she will feel her efforts vindicated by the outcome. Elaine saw us through production with minimum fuss and maximum effectiveness.

The majority of manuscripts were first submitted in or before December 2006, but it has been possible in some places to include references to developments in the early months of 2007. The decision of the House of Lords in *OBG Ltd v Allan* in May 2007 was too important to be ignored, but came too late to allow wholesale changes to the text. We have inserted such reference to the decision as time and other circumstances permitted.

Ken Oliphant
Bristol
22 June 2007

Preface to the First Edition

Tort law occupies a central position in the common law as a means of compensating individuals for harm caused by civil wrongs. Its derivation – from the latin *tortus*, meaning ‘twisted’ or ‘wrung’ (ie ‘wrong’) – confirms its medieval origins. But tort law has come a long way since the days of trespass *vi et armis* and the action upon the case (or trespass on the case). Besides legal historians, few lawyers would be familiar, at least in any detail, with the etymology of modern tort law and its many component torts. Today, the law of negligence has emerged as the dominant tort, sometime threatening to sweep all else, or most else, away in its wake. Its failure to do so has, in large part, been due to the resilience of other torts in providing compensation (or other remedies) for interests not protected fully (or at all) within any conventional view of negligence. Yet, as will be clear from the text of this book, negligence continues to grow in scope and the output of cases from the courts is prodigious. Torts such as defamation (reputation) and nuisance (enjoyment of land), protecting interests which are not necessarily core concerns for negligence, remain significant for those who have the financial ability to litigate.

In this volume the contributors seek to provide an analytical account of the frameworks of the many torts that protect the physical, property, economic or personality interests of the individual. They do so with an eye to the future as well as the past. Any ‘court watcher’ of recent times will immediately sense the shift in judicial attitudes to the development (by which is meant extension of) tort law. The ebbs and flows are well recognised, for example in the law of negligence. But the evolutionary nature of the law that this illustrates, is not limited to negligence and can be seen in others too, for example, defamation. The contributors, therefore, seek to state the law but also predict how the law might develop or retrench.

Torts law – for it can surely not be conceptualised any other way – is a fascinating area to study, replete with wrong-turnings and surprises for the analytically tidy mind. We hope this volume goes some way to expose and explore the intricacies of this very complex collection of legal claims.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the contributors and publishers for their persistence and dedication during the period this work has been in preparation.

Andrew Grubb

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