

**A GUIDE TO THE ROUTINE
OF A SOLICITOR'S OFFICE
FOR THE USE OF JUNIOR
CLERKS AND SCRIBES**

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A Guide to the Routine of a Solicitor's Office for the Use of Junior Clerks and Scribes by John C. Edgley

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JOHN C. EDGLEY

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A GUIDE
TO THE
Routine of a Solicitor's Office,

FOR THE USE OF
JUNIOR CLERKS AND SCRIBES.

By JOHN C. EDGLEY,

SHORTHAND WRITER AND LAW CLERK.

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1883.



INTRODUCTION.

A GREAT number of legal works have been written for the guidance of those in the profession, but they are almost exclusively for the benefit of the admitted practitioner or articled clerk, and the humbler workers have been forgotten: indeed, it is generally understood that so far as they are concerned, the lesson must be learned in the school of experience; and this is certainly true with respect to many little matters in the ordinary business of a Solicitor's Office. This little book is intended to give an insight of the general routine, and a few notes of practice have been appended in alphabetical order, which the Author trusts will be found useful to the junior law clerk.

The Author thinks it only right to mention that he is neither an admitted solicitor, or even an articled clerk; but he trusts that fifteen years experience as a copying and engrossing, general and shorthand clerk successively, in town and country offices, will be some guarantee that his little book is a useful one for the junior clerk to refer to.

4, RAYMOND BUILDINGS,
GRAY'S INN,
May, 1883.

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OFFICE ROUTINE.

The Office Lad.—His duties are to make himself generally useful, in and out of the office, and fill up his time with copying. He should learn to write a good round hand, free from flourishes, with short tops and tails to the letters. He must also learn the abbreviations in general use for drafts and legal documents.

It is generally the duty of the Office Boy to copy the letters in the press; to weigh, stamp, and post them, and keep a register of the letters posted or delivered, and the amount of postage. The proper method of copying letters is given under the head, "Copying Clerk." The Office Boy should also keep the Call Book, in which the names of all persons coming to the office should be entered. It is advisable to put down the time, and anything special as memoranda. It is also a good practice to enter in the call book the outdoor attendances of the principal and clerks: they are useful memoranda for entering up costs. The press letter book is often indexed by the Office Boy. This is very simple to do, but must be carefully done, as the omission of a letter might lead to trouble and even loss. The *surname* of the correspondent must be written first on the page indexed with the letter, and the Christian names follow as they stand in the ordinary way, viz.: a letter to "John Frederick Walker at page 91," should be indexed "Walker, John Frederick, 91." All future letters to that correspondent must be indexed

with the number of the page only, after the name already written. Great care must be taken not to miss a letter, or to open another index to the same correspondent. To avoid this, if it is uncertain whether a previous letter has been written to a correspondent, look carefully down the column to see that the name is not already there.

No blanks should be left, and no leaf should be torn out of the letter book, under any circumstances. If one be found imperfect, a memorandum should be made on the fly-leaf, signed by the person indexing the book, that such leaf was not used.

When a letter is written to a company, the name of which is not easily remembered, the letter may be indexed under T, commencing with the word "the": "The Chief Manager of the Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London, and China," may be indexed "Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London, and China, The Chief Manager," but another index under T, "(The) Chartered Mercantile Bank," &c., will be most useful as a reference, as the *primary* word in the title of the company may be forgotten.

The Office Boy sometimes endorses the miscellaneous letters with the name of the writer and the date, to be put away in bundles for each year, in alphabetical order; but this should be entrusted to the Copying Clerk. Receipts should be endorsed with the name of the giver and the date, and put away in bundles, like the miscellaneous letters.

The Office Boy must make himself acquainted with the public offices, and take every opportunity of learning what he can in the profession. He must be honest,

industrious, and respectful to his employers, and the elder clerks. Such a lad deserves encouragement, and will get it.

Copying Clerk.—He should write a good round hand, close and compact, the tops and tails respectively should not be longer than the height of the short letters, and flourishing must be avoided.

It is absolutely necessary for the Copying Clerk to know the abbreviations used in the drafts of legal documents. A list of the principal abbreviations is given at page 18.

Engrossments.—An engrossment is the neat copy of a draft deed, or document which is intended to be the original; and whether it is written on parchment or paper, the words should be at full length, dates and figures being in words. The only exceptions to this rule are, the number of a regiment, society, or house, which are better written in figures.

Stops should not be used in engrossments. As they might possibly alter the tenor of the clause, and could be interpolated after the execution of the deed, they are not noticed in reading it.

The length of any engrossment is calculated by the folio of 72 words, except probates, in which 90 words are counted to a folio.

The Copying Clerk must learn to engross in the ordinary German text, and also the old English engrossing hands. The latter writing was formerly used for the engrossment of nearly all deeds, but now the ordinary round hand writing is generally used, being plainer to read, and more expeditiously written, the words at the beginning of each clause only being "texted." The