

Books by Fellows: Cultural Heritage Conventions and Other Instruments

Were you aware that there are now enough international heritage laws and conventions to fill a book of 343 pages of densely packed text? Fellow Patrick O'Keefe, a consultant to many governments in the drafting of heritage protection legislation, has brought them all together, along with Lyndel Prott, former Director of UNESCO's Cultural Heritage Division, in a volume called *Cultural Heritage Conventions and Other Instruments: a compendium with commentaries* (ISBN: 9781903987124; Institute of Art and Law <www.iat.uk.com>). Most of the 'instruments' in the book are conventions, protocols and recommendations: in other words they are non-binding expressions of hope rather than laws that can be enforced, which says a lot, unfortunately, about the priority that governments place on heritage protection. This book includes tables showing which 'states parties' as they tend to be cited in international law ('countries' to you and me) have ratified which treaties, and when. The commentaries that introduce the text of each convention draw out the key points and discuss any subsequent case law that might affect the interpretation of specific phrases and words. Looking back at some sixty years' worth of 'standard setting for the cultural heritage', the authors conclude that 'important groundwork has been done', but that 'sometime in the future there will be a need to try to rationalise this great body of material so as to make it consistent and easily accessible to future managers',