Don the Admiral’s hat and, like Alice, you step through the looking glass into a different world. Whilst the promulgation of the Admiralty Jurisdiction Regulation Act 105 of 1983 may have done away with the historical anomaly of two separate jurisdictions being applicable to the same subject matter but applying different law in our courts, it has in no way robbed South African maritime law of the compelling uniqueness of its character and the romantic appeal with which it is endowed by its seafaring origins. Appearing in 2006, the first edition of this work captured all the historic and contemporary intrigue with which the diversity of our admiralty jurisdiction is imbued and provided for steady navigation through the esoteric world of concepts such as the action in rem, instituted by arrest, and the maritime lien, itself a ‘Noah’s Ark’ housing peculiar species.

The second edition preserves all that is valuable about this guide to a fascinating world, but improves on its predecessor with the addition of reference to the admiralty law in other jurisdictions with which we share a common colonial history and whose maritime law consequently developed through the application of the Colonial Courts of Admiralty Act of 1890 and its extensive jurisdictional provisions.

Associated South African legislation identified with clarity and a comprehensive case list which is representative of the law as it stood at 30 November 2011 are cross-referenced with applicable passages in the accessible text.

An anthology of the principal authorities cited and similar treatment of the international conventions referred to adds value to this work as an aid to broader reading. With or without a bottle of rum, this beautifully presented book proves to be a fascinating and worthwhile read.

Richard Brooks, Grahamstown Bar

For over 40 years the Burchell and Hunt series on South African criminal law and procedure has provided invaluable assistance to the lawyers of the criminal courts, earning its place as an essential item in the armoury of practitioners both entering the arena for the first time and returning thereto a little older and, hopefully, a little wiser. The fourth edition of the first volume gives valuable revitalisation to this major and definitive work on the general principles of criminal law. It expresses the revision of those principles which has occurred primarily under the influence of the Bill of Rights in South Africa. It continues to reflect the benefit of the articulate and competent reworking of the text achieved by Professor Jonathan Burchell of the University of Cape Town, first sensitively demonstrated in the third edition in 1997.

The major triumph of the work must be the inclusion of critical evaluations of leading judgments of the Constitutional Court in those areas where our criminal law has been affected by the judicial scrutiny of that body, and an analysis of the first sixteen years of Constitutional Court jurisprudence in the field of criminal law generally. The impact of consequential amendments to the statute books is not overlooked and, appropriately, cases reported in The South African Criminal Law Reports until the end of June 2011 receive attention. The expansion of the work which has resulted from the extensive revision entrenches its definitive importance convincingly and encourages an even wider readership.

Richard Brooks, Grahamstown Bar

Readers of Advocate are invited to contribute or comment on any aspect of the law and practice in general: eg the organised Bar’s role in SA (the Bar is facing regulatory changes which could drastically revolutionise the way it works), Bar life, practice management, profiles of members, pro bono work, and legislation. Humorous and other anecdotes of life at the Bar are welcome.

Views need not be politically correct to qualify for publication. But they must be short and to the point. Submit material to the editor or your local Bar representative or editorial committee member. Articles or letters can also at an author’s request be published anonymously.