

Focus on UK Serials Group member

# Bailey Subscription Agents

*Andrew Grieve, Manager (Customer Services)*

In 1988, Bailey's are celebrating twenty-one years at Warner House in Folkestone. However, the experience of the company in providing an international subscriptions service to customers stretches back nearly sixty years. Recent years have seen many changes and developments in the operation - but first, something of the background of the company and the Bailey Group.

The Bailey family has been connected with the book trade since the middle of the nineteenth century. James Alexander Bailey, great-grandfather of the present chairman of the group, was something of an adventurer. He left England in 1839 and made his fortune, first in Australia and later in America as a "forty-niner" at the time of the California Gold Rush.

However, his sons Alfred and Frank Evans followed the more sober calling of the book trade back home in England. Frank, who ran a bookshop in Seven Sisters Road in London, was offered some imperfect copies of a university press Bible. He decided to rebind the bibles and sell them through the shop at a reduced rate. An interest in book-binding flourished, and by 1914 Bailey Brothers Ltd. was being run by the next generation of the family, brothers Frank and Alex, specialising in fine leather bindings.

Edward Swinfen joined the company, bringing

experience in publishing and bookselling, and initiated the book import agency side of the business. In 1929, the group was first incorporated as Bailey Bros. & Swinfen Ltd. Bailey's subscription business began at this time, with the acquisition of several important academic and institutional accounts, which have remained with us to this day.

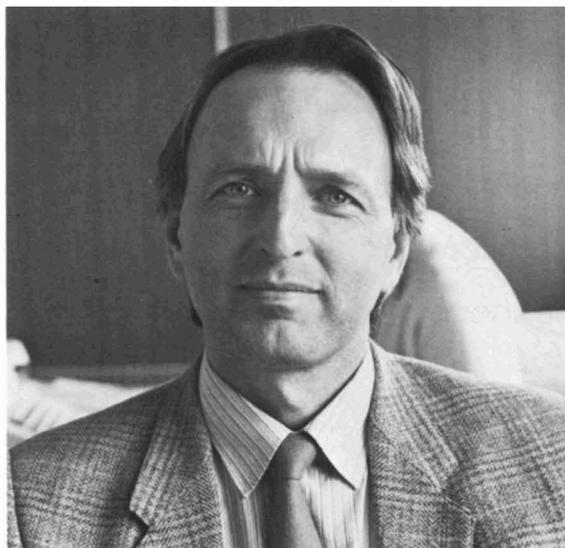
The company now moved to offices in Paternoster Row in the heart of the publishing world. The premises were completely destroyed in 1941 during the Blitz, and for the rest of the war the company was located in the bindery building, from where it continued to supply European language dictionaries and phrase books to Allied troops.

Since the war, the subscription, dictionary, and import bookselling services have continued and expanded under the leadership of the present chairman of the group, John R. Bailey. Bailey's became school and library suppliers in New Zealand, thus starting Bailey & Swinfen Exports Ltd.

In 1967, it was decided to move from the London offices in Upper Thames Street to a new base in Folkestone, in order to meet the needs of an expanding business which now included educational and trade publishing. Very pleasant



**D.H. Bennison,**  
Managing Director



**John Jardine,**  
UK Sales Manager

surroundings are enjoyed here at Warner House and even, on a clear day, fine views of France! It is always a pleasure when customers and friends visit Folkestone to view the operation and meet the staff.

Recent developments in services to publishers include book distribution and a publicity mailing service. In the field of serials, Bailey's Subscription Fulfilment Service for journal publishers began in 1983 and has met with great success. This service provides confidential and efficient administration for a large and growing number of publishers' subscription lists.

Turning to Bailey Subscription Agents Ltd., the company became the first member of the group to be computerised, in 1973. Initially an external computer bureau was employed, but in due course plans were laid to extend the facilities to meet changing needs. A DEC system was installed in 1983, and over the last five years it has been considerably updated and expanded with a more than three-fold increase in capacity.

Mr. D.H. Bennison, Managing Director of Bailey Subscription Agents, brings many years' experience to the modern world of serials. The Data Processing Manager, David Addison, has superintended the development of automated services. In charge of the customer department is the Subscription Manager, Mrs. Linda Styles, who heads a busy office of section supervisors and their assistants. Staff receive full training and gain experience in handling the requirements of all types of customers, whether university library or

small college, manufacturing company or financial institution.

John Jardine, UK Sales Manager, will be well known to many UKSG members. He has recently been joined from the customer department by Andrew Grieve, now Manager (Customer Services). This will increase personal contact with existing and potential customers both at home and abroad.

Extensive in-house research and back-up facilities now include CD-ROM technology, and co-operation has started with publishers on the electronic transmission of subscription orders on magnetic tape. A new serials management computer package for libraries is currently under development.

The year 1988 sees the development of sponsorship schemes undertaken by Bailey's in co-operation with professional library bodies. Annual awards and prizes will support student librarians, with the specific aim of encouraging awareness and interest in serials. This type of inter-trade involvement is very important and the closer links forged with professional library colleagues is valued.

As long-standing members of the UKSG, Bailey's offer sincere congratulations on the successful launch of *Serials*.

Having traced just a little of the past and present of the company in this article, it only remains to say that Bailey's look forward to the challenge of the future, fully committed to giving an attractive and comprehensive service to customers.