

Editorial

As I take over the Editorship of *Serials* I am very conscious of the hard work and dedication of my predecessors. Our journal has a vital role to play in the UKSG, and with the help of our active and talented editorial advisory board, it should go from strength to strength.

In 1990 I took early retirement as Director of Blackwell's Periodicals Division but my interest in serials has remained and in particular the UKSG, which I helped to found in 1978.

As *Serials* is published primarily for the members, it will continue to be a mixture of serious articles and newsy items. We are beginning a Letters to the Editor column, together with a "letting off steam" section called The Hobby Horse Column - do *you* feel strongly about something? This is your chance to air your views unless they are libellous!

Although there is no shortage of burning topics in the serials world, one issue stands out and that is firm and timely prices for subscription renewals. This crusade was initiated by the Association of Research Libraries in the USA and has now been taken up by the Chief Librarians of national and university libraries (including the former polytechnics) in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. In a statement dated 7

April 1993 they urgently requested that publishers belonging to the STM international organisation, and US and European subscription agencies, this year and in future years take steps to lessen the serious difficulties confronting the research libraries, by establishing and notifying to their customers firm price quotations for subscriptions for the following calendar year by 1 September of the current year. In order for the subscription agencies to meet this request it will be necessary for the publishers to make price decisions some time before 1 September.

All too often, under current practices, subscription prices are set late in the year, are supplemented with additional charges after libraries have made payments, or are simply not communicated promptly to customers or agencies. Such practices do not afford research librarians enough time to make careful comparisons before taking a final decision as to continuation or cancellation.

None will deny in a perfect world it would lead to greater efficiency all round, but there are other factors, not least foreign exchange rate fluctuations.

The debate continues.

John Merriman

UKSG News

New Serials Groups

News has been coming in of meetings held recently in Spain to establish a Spanish Serials Group. An executive committee is currently being formed made up of representatives of each of the parties involved in serials following an exploratory meeting in May in Madrid attended by Miguel Jiménez of CSIC, Pilar Alcalá of the Universidad Alcalá de Henares, Pilar Bravo of the Ministry of Culture and Cristina de la Peña of Swets. The new group will be an independent body with no direct links to the existing Spanish library and documentation associations.

Concurrent with this has been an offer by the library of the Universidad Politécnica de Valencia (a member of the UKSG) to help organise a possible Third European Serials Conference in Spain in 1995, in association with the Spanish Serials Group and the proposed Federation of European Serials Groups.

The UKSG has also recently heard of the probable creation of a Central European Serials Group and a further offer to assist in running a European Serials Conference in Budapest.

The UKSG's European Serials Conference Subcommittee is meeting in July with representatives of the Dutch NVB Serials Group when these offers

will be reviewed as part of the plans for a possible third conference.

It was also announced at the Annual Conference in March that a serials group had now been established in Sweden. We are still awaiting further information from these new and proposed groups and will report further in future issues of *Serials*.

At the UKSG AGM at Southampton in March it was resolved that the Group take further steps, in association with the NVB Serials Group, to establish the proposed European Federation of Serials Groups. This was as a result of the recommendation of a small Working Party which had met to consider ways in which the Group could raise the profile of serials activities and developments within the context of Europe as a whole and how assistance and advice might be offered to organisations and individuals in European countries concerning their local needs, as well as those considering setting up national serials groups. The Working Party was also asked to consider future policy with regard to the European Serials Conference.

The recommendations of the Working Party were that a European Federation of Serials Groups be established. The Federation should:

be independent of the UKSG, with its own constitution

- have as its initial members the UKSG and the NVB Serials Group and subsequently any newly established groups
- act as a body for representing serials' interests in the wider European context
- be the umbrella body for organising, through its members, any future European Serials Conferences.

The Working Party proposed that where requested by UKSG members either within Europe or elsewhere, 'country' or 'geographic' sections would be set up within the UKSG in order to provide cohesion of the UKSG members within that area and to enable training and education activities to be organised locally where required. Positive assistance would be provided by the UKSG Committee to support and encourage such local sections.

If members are aware of new serials groups being established we should be delighted to receive details and to keep such groups informed of developments with regard to the European Federation and the Third European Serials Conference. The Committee is also very interested to hear the view of members outside the UK concerning the value and possibilities of the proposed 'geographic' sections.

Albert Prior
Chairman

New Committee

Back row (left to right): Brian Cox, Pergamon (Secretary); Lyndsay Rees-Jones, National Grid; Peter Walsh, Kings College.

Middle row: Albert Prior, Swets (Chair); Albert Mullis, British Library; Brian Hackett, Huddersfield University; Jill Tolson, Group Administrator; Will Wakeling, Birmingham University.

Front row: Ros Doig, Derby University; Hazel Woodward, Loughborough University; Mieko Yamaguchi, University College of N. Wales; John Cox, Blackwell's (Treasurer).

Unfortunately, Stella Pilling of the British Library Document Supply Centre escaped



Our photograph shows the Committee of the UKSG following the elections which took place at the AGM on 23rd March at the Southampton Conference. Albert Prior, John Cox and Brian Cox were elected Chair, Treasurer and Secretary respectively for their second year of office. Fifteen nominations were received for the other nine places. Our commiserations go to those nominees who failed to be elected on this occasion but also our thanks. Their willingness to be involved at committee level with the affairs of the Group is appreciated and their non-election this year will hopefully not deter them from standing again in future.

John Urquhart

Many of our members know John Urquhart of Newcastle University. This year John leaves the Committee of the Group. He was the last of the founding members of the Committee which was formed when the Group was set up in 1978. Over the years John has seen the UKSG grow from a small group of librarians, publishers and agents who shared a common interest in serials, to the international organisation of over 500 members that the UKSG has now become. John's interest in serials and the relationships with publishers and agents goes back even earlier than 1978 as he and I have fond memories of the first periodicals conference in 1975, which led eventually to the creation of the UKSG. This was held in the elegant surroundings of Christ Church Oxford - one of our noteworthy speakers at that event being Robert Maxwell. John's room provided the venue for a lively late night party, and probably set the pattern for the informal social events that have been part of the annual conferences ever since.

We send our thanks to John for his inimitable and enthusiastic Committee involvement over the years and the valuable part he has played in the Group's growth and success.

*Albert Prior
Chairman*

Membership

Membership at the end of 1992 stood at 507, broken down as follows:

| Category | UK | Overseas |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Booksellers | 1 | 2 |
| Bookbinders | 2 | 0 |
| Bibliographic utilities | 2 | 0 |
| Colleges | 17 | 5 |
| Consultants | 3 | 2 |
| Government libraries | 37 | 8 |
| Industrial libraries | 25 | 1 |
| Individual members | 8 | 10 |
| Medical, health, pharm. libs. | 32 | 4 |
| National libraries | 12 | 19 |
| Polytechnics | 0 | 2 |
| Printers | 1 | 0 |
| Professional associations | 11 | 3 |
| Public libraries | 3 | 1 |
| Publishers | 64 | 15 |
| Research libraries | 5 | 6 |
| Subscription agents | 13 | 17 |
| Software suppliers | 6 | 0 |
| University libraries | 93 | 72 |
| Veterinary & agricultural libs. | 3 | 1 |
| Total | 339 | 168 |