

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT AT WORK: WHAT GOES ON AT A UKSG COMMITTEE MEETING

Report by Brian Cox, UKSG Secretary



Albert Prior (Chair, UKSG)

Alison Souster (Administrative Assistant)

Jill Tolson (Administrator)

Our latest committee meeting was held on 29 September 1993 at the headquarters of the National Grid, Coventry, courtesy of their librarian, Lyndsay Rees-Jones. Fifteen members attended, including 3 recently co-opted members of the committee, Keith Courtney of Taylor & Francis, Caroline Moss-Gibbons from AFRC Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research and Peter Williams of Mechanical Engineering Publications Ltd, together with our Administrator, Jill Tolson and Alison Souster who was recently recruited to work with Jill as Administrative Assistant. Ros Doig was unable to attend as she is nursing her sick husband and a

greetings card expressing our good wishes on behalf of the group was sent to her.

Albert Prior (Chair) reported on this year's NASIG conference which was held in Providence, Rhode Island, USA in June 1993, and commented on the excellent workshops and interesting keynote papers by local Brown University scientists. NASIG hold a similar annual meeting to our own conference but there is no exhibition.

Brian Cox (Secretary) reported on a recent meeting in Utrecht with Peter Bongers the Chair of both the NVB Serials Group in The Netherlands and of the embryo European Federation of Serials Groups. So far the constituent societies of the federation are; NVB Serials Group, the Spanish Serials Group and the UKSG.

He also reported on the one day seminar which he had organised with Bernard Donovan,

Brian Cox is Director of Journals Business, Pergamon Press Ltd, Headington Hill Hall, Oxford, OX3 0BW

the Secretary of ALPSP, and which was held in London on 22 September. "The Journal at the Crossroads" attracted 125 attendees, librarians and publishers. There were some stimulating papers from academics, publishers and librarians, followed by a panel discussion in the afternoon. The meeting was chaired with skill and aplomb by Gordon Graham the editor of *LOGOS*. The papers will be published partly in *Serials* and partly in *Learned Publishing, the Journal of the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers*.

In addition to its 1993 annual conference the group has also held a 2 day seminar in May in conjunction with the National Acquisitions Group. The papers have been published as *Taming the Electronic Jungle, Electronic Information: The Collection Management Issues*, and this monograph is available from the National Acquisitions Group.

John Cox (Treasurer) reported on the financial affairs of the Group which are very healthy. He also invited a discussion about the possibility of VAT on books and journals and the Group's attitude to this. Our Secretary has written a number of letters to successive Chancellors of the Exchequer but John Cox felt that we should take further action along the lines of the campaign which was being mounted under the auspices of the Booksellers and Publishers Associations asking members to write to their local MPs to lobby them against such a tax. Our chair has subsequently written to members soliciting support for this campaign.

John Merriman, the editor of *Serials*, reported on the publication of the July issue with 100 pages including 11 pages of advertisements. He mentioned the good support he was getting from his editorial board but felt that the journal currently leans rather heavily on conference papers and needs more original articles in addition to more news topics. He asked the editorial board to address these points but also requested that the committee consider and submit topics for commissioned articles.

Will Wakeling (Marketing Officer) described the activities he was preparing to market the group's image. Following the successful launch of the T-shirt featuring the opening pages of the first issue of the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* he was preparing a follow-up with a shirt

featuring the French *Journal des savants* which was also published in the 17th century but which unfortunately did not survive into modern times. He is also looking at the possibility of providing ties and tie-pins etc., with the Group's logo.

Jill Tolson (Administrator) reported on the successful networking of her 2 PC's which had enabled her to employ Alison Souster to assist with the administration of the Group. Members will be interested to know that Jill's office will shortly be connected to the JANET network.

The programme of papers and workshops for our annual conference at UMIST Manchester in April 1994 was discussed and the delegate rates agreed. The resident delegate fee will be £185, and exhibitors £490 including delegate privileges for one person per exhibition stand. Additional staff members attend at delegate rates.

Thought was given to future conference venues. We had originally booked Cardiff University for 1995 but they had recently announced their move to two semesters rather than three terms each year, so that the facilities were not available to us during April. Visits have been made by Brian Cox, Brian Hackett and Hazel Woodward to Exeter, Keele, Nottingham and Oxford. Agreement was reached to go to Exeter University for 1995.

Albert Prior and Hazel Woodward reported on meetings with the Spanish Serials Group and with contacts at the Universidad Politecnica de Valencia, Spain where we plan to hold our Third European Serials Conference in 1995. They were favourably impressed, especially with the commitment of the staff at the University. Furthermore, there is a good lecture theatre and other meeting rooms, together with translation equipment on-site. We plan that the conference will be in English but with Spanish translation which is an interesting new challenge for the Group. This event will be jointly organised by the UKSG, NVB Serials Group and the newly formed Spanish Serials Group.

Albert Mullis reported on the progress of *Serials Publications: Guidelines for Good Practice in Publishing Printed Journals and other Serial Publications*. This publication has been prepared by a joint working party of ALPSP, Association of Subscription Agents, the Publishers Association and the UKSG, and will be published in March 1994 in time for our annual conference.

Peter Walsh tabled a draft questionnaire for our forthcoming automation survey. Later this year it will be circulated to members in the UK and Ireland, and also to selected non-members. The results will be published with a summary and evaluation in a future issue of SERIALS.

The afternoon was devoted to a brainstorming session to review our current activities and consider what new projects the committee need to initiate in order to provide the best programmes and services for our members. Now that the UKSG is in its 16th year it was felt appropriate to re-appraise the current role of the group and the way ahead. The committee considered that the group should be a forum for discussion, for the dissemination of information and examples of the best practices rather than becoming overtly political. In cases such as the possible imposition of VAT on books and journals

which would seriously affect all members, it was, however, considered that we should take a stronger stand. It was agreed that more resources should be put into our education programme with additional workshops to assist particularly the staff of small and specialist libraries. We should heighten our relationships with other bodies such as NAG and SCONUL and do more for publisher members through closer association with ALPSP and STM. We will initiate small discussion groups of influential people through these organisations to consider needs and concerns of mutual interest. The group will look at the importance of networks for academics, librarians, publishers and booksellers. Following from these discussions funds have been earmarked for research which will be undertaken as suitable topics are presented.

A cautionary tale from Derek Law, Director of Information Services and Systems, King's College London

It concerns a publisher and a librarian in a Kenyan game reserve who see a pride of lions on the horizon. They climb down from the Landrover and crawl towards the pride to take some photos. The closer they get the more photogenic the scene becomes. After a time, the leader of the pride stretches and begins to walk towards them, then to lope, and then to run. The tourists look round wildly. There are no trees in sight and the Landrover is now a mile away. The librarian then whips off his backpack and starts to pull on a pair of Adidas trainers. "Don't be stupid", screams the publisher, "you can't outrun a lion." "No", says the librarian, struggling with the second shoe, "but all I have to do is outrun you."

The moral of the tale is not that it is as dangerous for STM publishers to go on safari as to go on a yacht, but that by embracing networking wholeheartedly we will ensure that sufficient trees are left to make life safe for both of us.