

Editorial

Not so many years ago the publishing industry was noted for its volatility. Takeovers, mergers, rationalisation, job changes and losses were regular occurrences, as were the disappearance of old established and well known names. Now it seems it is the turn of the subscription agents.

The Association of Subscription Agents is an international organisation with twenty-nine members. Ten years ago the membership consisted of eleven British companies. Of these only four are left. A similar pattern can be discerned in the USA.

But it was not until 1994 that the impossible and unthinkable happened. Faxon, a long-established world leader and highly respected company, was put up for sale and shock waves went through the serials community as they have never done before. Let us hope that the new owners of Faxon Europe and Faxon USA will carry on the traditions of this great company.

The UKSG is not unaffected by change. Our Chairman, Albert Prior, has moved to Holland to take up the new post of International Marketing Director for Swets & Zeitlinger. His departure will be a great loss for us. He has carried out the difficult task of Chairman with good humour, professionalism and integrity.

So where do the present trends leave serial librarians? Obviously the most serious implication is that the choice of agent is becoming more and more restricted. Theoretically the battle of the giants should give better value-added services, cost effectiveness, efficiency and technological wizardry, but the fact remains that many librarians still hanker after personal service, and to feel confident that a friendly human being with a name is looking after their account. Maybe all of the giants can offer the best of both worlds, but there is still a role for the smaller agent, and there are a number of them left - at the moment!

John Merriman

UKSG News

A new chair for UKSG

Albert Prior, Director of Swets UK Limited, has given many years of service to our Group having been a member of the UKSG Committee for 14 years, the last two as Chairman. Albert is, however, moving to Swets & Zeitlinger at Lisse in The Netherlands and has, therefore, relinquished the chairmanship of our Committee. We are sorry to lose Albert's hand at the wheel but wish him good fortune in his new post in Holland.

At our last Committee meeting on 26 May 1994, various options for a successor were discussed as the Group's constitution does not provide for this eventuality. I am pleased to be

able to tell you that following our discussions, Will Wakeling, Head of Collection Management at Birmingham University Library, was appointed as Acting Chair with the unanimous agreement of your Committee. He therefore takes over his new responsibilities from July 1994 and will serve the remainder of Albert's current term until March 1995. Will has been a member of the Committee for four years, the last two as Marketing Officer, and we are all delighted that he has agreed to be our new Chair.

Brian Cox
Secretary, UK Serials Group



Albert Prior and Will Wakeling

A letter from Albert Prior to UKSG Members

As many of you will know, I was re-elected at the April AGM as Chairman of the UKSG for a further year, having completed two years in this role.

However, since that AGM in Manchester, I have been offered a position as a member of the Board of Directors of Swets at our Head Office in Lisse, The Netherlands. It is an exciting new post with tremendous challenges, so I have decided to accept. It does mean however, that for all practical purposes, it will now not be possible for me to continue as Chairman of the Group and therefore I have relinquished the post at our meeting in May, with effect from 30 June.

I am delighted that the Committee has asked Will Wakeling to stand in as acting Chairman until new elections take place in April 1995 at Exeter. Will is Head of Collection Management at Birmingham University and acts as Marketing Officer of the UKSG. He is well known to very many of you and brings a high degree of enthusiasm and creative talents to the post.

Whilst I am excited by the opportunities offered by my new post, there is a sad element to my elevation in that I have been a member of the UKSG Committee for some 13 to 14 years and

indeed was involved in the first Blackwell Periodicals Conferences in 1975 and 1977, whilst employed at Blackwell's, which led eventually to the formation of the Group. I shall of course remain a member of the Group and hope to be at the 1995 Conference at Exeter. Since 1977 I have worked for Swets in the UK, from the time when it was a one-man band to its current position as one of the leading UK subscription agents with some 50 staff in this country. So, leaving colleagues in Abingdon after 17 years, for a new position in Holland, will also prove to be something of a novel and sad experience for me.

The UKSG and Swets UK Ltd have both been very significant elements of my life during the 80s and early 90s. I have made many friends and enjoyed tremendously my involvement with the UKSG Committee. Our meetings have been stimulating and fun - in the company of very committed and enthusiastic colleagues. I would like to thank them for all their support and know that the Group will continue to flourish and go on to even greater success. I hope I have the chance of seeing many members at future UKSG and other professional events.

Kind regards

Albert Prior
Swets United Kingdom Ltd