



## Editorial

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So, the UKSG Annual Conference has come and gone, and all the indications are that it was a great success. 278 full residential delegates was an all-time record. The total attendance figure of 410 was very close to the record figure of 412 in 1992. 94 delegates were from overseas.

The dictionary definition of a conference is 'a formal meeting, especially one held annually, at which delegates representing different states or organisations, or different branches of the same organisation, discuss and debate matters of common interest'. So how do we measure up to this? According to the 120 questionnaires that were returned, the delegates were very pleased. The one exception, who found everything wrong - unfriendly, badly organised, poor papers badly presented - will never attend another UKSG Conference.

To run a successful conference of this size requires a tremendous amount of planning and a high degree of organisational and interpersonal skills, qualities which fortunately are possessed by our able Administrator.

As the Conference grows in size, so the choice of a suitable venue becomes more and more restricted. We need a well-equipped lecture theatre that will seat 400, an exhibition area close by, comfortable halls of residence within walking distance and a large hall for the social events. The field has narrowed down to a small number of universities and the Conference will rotate between these. Some universities employ high-powered marketing people who at the initial

meeting are impressive. Unfortunately behind them often lies an inefficient bureaucratic system, with very poor support during the conference. With the best planning possible, things go wrong, particularly in the exhibition area where high-tech equipment has to be installed. It is essential to have a fast, efficient back-up service to put matters right.

The other key issue for a successful conference is a well balanced programme. The papers must be relevant and well presented, and it is not easy to find both a good paper and a good speaker. At least with the latest technology we hope that overheads which can only be read from the front three rows are a thing of the past.

The UKSG has always given great emphasis to the social side of the Conference, believing that much useful 'networking' takes place at these events. We have many staunch supporters who return year after year, and they treat the Conference very much as an annual reunion and enjoy the social side. The introduction of an informal Sunday evening out in a pub has proved to be very popular.

The highspot of the 10th Anniversary Conference was a splendid banquet at Blenheim Palace, near Oxford. John Mortimer gave a very witty after-dinner speech. The 20th Anniversary Conference in 1997 is in Edinburgh. The venue for the celebration dinner will be in suitably impressive surroundings and again we will have a distinguished after-dinner speaker. Hope you will be there.