



News from the European Federation of Serials Groups

Third European Serials Conference
Trinity College,
Dublin, Ireland.

27th September 1996

Dear Auntie Sadie,

Just thought I would drop you a line from Dublin as the conference has just finished and I know you like to keep in touch with what's going on.

[Auntie Sadie, now retired, used to be librarian for the Rothwell Temperance Brass Band. Keeping track on the second euphonium part, or rather looking under the bus seats after a concert in Roundhay Park, was her main problem but the combined claiming modules of today's library systems could not have matched her ability to memorise her entire serials cardex. Quoting 10 years of claim rates and price increases on The Bandsman, and Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Weekly was a favourite party trick.]

This was my first trip to Dublin. On enquiring from the taxi driver on the weather forecast, I immediately warmed to the place when he responded, "it often rains in between the showers". The campus of Trinity College is comprised predominantly of 'learned' architecture built around extremely large square billiard tables with no pockets, but shoved in between are a couple of concrete constructions of unknown parentage. In one of these newer facilities was the conference and exhibition. Would it have hurt too much to build in a couple of windows? or perhaps that would have increased the contrast even more.

[Yes, Auntie Sadie was a lady of the world, much travelled courtesy of Wallace Arnold with a natural eye for quality way before Quality Management become a revenue source for consultants.]

You can read most of the papers presented in this or subsequent issues of *Serials*, which is a good job as unfortunately I missed some of them as I was talking to clients on our stand. The opening speaker Peter Vervest 'An overview approaching the millennium' did an excellent job of making us question the status quo, arguing that we must be open for radical change. Yes, not only is nostalgia not what it was but looking into the crystal ball requires new paradigms. The next morning Thomas Hoeren was not able to attend due to illness but John Cox convincingly recited the paper 'Intellectual property and copyright law in the European Union and other major jurisdictions: a birds eye view' in his dulcet tones, correctly deciding that a slight German accent would have been over the top. I liked Patrick Kelly's paper on the IRIS project, honestly describing where they had been successful, namely technically and in library co-operation, and where they had not, namely in the commercial aspects. I was disappointed with David Brown's 'Reinventing the subscription agent' which was based on his commission from the UKSG to write a report on the future role of the agent. Whilst listing various possible players who could fulfil the intermediary role in a fully electronic world he seemed not to favour subscription agents, but did not argue why. In fact the only clear message was that we had to buy the report if we wanted the full story, although his survey of SCONUL libraries is

