



Editorial

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I often wonder why growing old is a reason for celebration. Certainly for human beings the process represents a steady decline and loss of faculties. Many organisations which are successful at first gradually fail and cease to exist.

As we approach the 20th anniversary of the founding of the UKSG, it is a good time to take stock and see how the aging process is being handled. There is a fine balance between maintaining the original objectives and successfully adapting to change.

It is important to remember that the original aims were to promote discussion and the free flow of information on serials matters and associated new technologies, develop personal and formal links between all parties in the serials information chain, and encourage professional awareness, stimulate research and provide a programme of training and education.

It was never seen as a bosses organisation. Therefore all charges have to be affordable. We were never tempted into holding our conferences in plush hotels, but have faithfully stuck to university venues, which over the years have greatly improved.

One great strength has been that the trade and the professionals have always been able to work together in harmony.

Deliberately, the organisational structure has been kept simple. The administrative office is still small considering the size and many activities of the Group. There are only two paid staff. Policy and decision-making is the province of the main Committee, who are supported by the Marketing and Education subcommittees and the *Serials* Editorial Board. The Group has never allowed itself to become bogged down by bureaucracy.

One of the main objectives has been the pursuit of excellence in everything we do. Some measure of our success is that we have been used as a role model for the setting up of groups in other countries, and we have always attracted an international membership. Many of the leading figures in serials have willingly given their time and expertise. Most of the founder members have now retired. Listing names is a dangerous activity, but to give a few examples of those who laid the foundations and made a substantial contribution, I would mention Maeve Brennan, Connie Hawkes, Catherine Olver, John Urquhart, David Wood and David Woodworth.

Many friendships and useful professional contacts have been made. The social side of the conference has always been important. Although the papers presented are generally serious and address key issues of the day, it has always been the policy to create a friendly, relaxed and sociable atmosphere. Because of pressure of work the membership voted for a shorter conference. However, the optional pre-conference social evening in a pub has proved to be very popular. You just cannot keep some people down!

As a founder member of the Group, its continuing growth and success is a source of great satisfaction for me. It is my hope that *Serials* will not only be a journal of international repute, but will always be enjoyable to read.

Financially sound and with a good management team, the future for the Group looks bright, although we must never become complacent. In the new information age the term 'serials' may become redundant, but I am sure the Group will be able to cope with that.

Happy birthday, UKSG!