



## Editorial

**John Merriman**

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Anyone planning to hold a conference in the middle of a very attractive botanical garden and arboretum could do no better than the delightful campus of Exeter University where we held the 1998 conference. Pleasant surroundings help the 'feel good factor', which is important for the successful conference, and we hope that the 427 delegates were aware of this.

Unfortunately, because of the restrictions on numbers, 59 potential delegates had to be turned away. As the UKSG membership continues to grow at an unprecedented rate (currently 631 organisations) we are faced with a dilemma about the size of the conference, which is governed by the capacity of the few academic venues still able to accommodate us.

We believe the UKSG conference has remained special because of the sense of togetherness engendered by a university campus. The alternative, and expensive, option is to use hotels and meet in a conference centre in places like Bournemouth and Brighton. The Committee believes this would destroy the UKSG conference as we now know it. Therefore, other solutions have to be found. One which will be tried out in Manchester in 1999 is a quota system. This will particularly apply to large commercial organisations who typically may send up to twelve delegates. We believe that every member organisation should have a right to send one delegate to what is the main event of the year. There will be further pressure on numbers in 1999 as it is a joint conference with the European Federation of Serials Groups. It is interesting to note that we already receive strong support from outside the UK. This year 80 delegates came from abroad.

Our 'People' page diligently tracks the movements of serials folk. However, there are

several names which I would like to highlight in this column as well.

Heartiest congratulations to Hazel Woodward on her appointment as Campus Librarian of Cranfield University. Hazel is not only a leading light in serials in the UK, but also has an enviable international reputation. She has for many years devoted much of her time to UKSG affairs, including serving a term as Chair (not Chairman!). Sadly she did not stand for re-election to the Committee, but we hope she will continue to be a tower of strength on the Editorial Board of *Serials*. How true in her case is the old saying "if you want a job done well, give it to a busy person".

Someone who will be greatly missed is Brian Cox (Elsevier), who retired at the end of June and will no longer serve on the Committee. Deeply involved in the UKSG since its inception in 1978, Brian has quietly played a vital role in the success of the Group. For the past few years he has taken on the onerous task of organising the Conference exhibition and keeping all the exhibitors happy, as far as that is humanly possible. The good news is that he will continue to serve on the Editorial Board of *Serials*. Welcome to the Retired Layabouts Club, Brian.

The last, but not least, name to mention is Ros Doig (University of Derby) who was not re-elected. She brought her own special enthusiasms to our meetings and we will miss her.

Anyone checking the organisations represented by the Committee members will see that they not only represent a balanced cross-section of the membership, but also bring with them a wealth of professional expertise and skills. This makes for a very powerful and active Committee, which is essential for the continuing success of the UKSG.