

# Editorial



*The Editors and 'golden' friend at Henley*

The Report of the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee Tenth Report of Session 2003–04, *Scientific Publications: Free for all?* contains many recommendations of significance to the serials community, although we have to wait until mid-November to hear what the Government response to it will be! The recommendations, as you know, can be broken down into a number of different topics including: open access, institutional repositories, the scientific journals market, intellectual property rights, library budgets and VAT.

Depending upon where you sit in the serials information chain you will have differing viewpoints on recommendations such as: “the Research Councils and other Government funders [should] mandate their funded researchers to deposit a copy of all their articles in a repository” (No. 44); or recommendation No. 16 “that the JISC develop an independent set of measures, agreed by subscribers and publishers alike, to monitor trends in journals pricing. This will help exert pressure on the publishing industry to self-regulate more effectively and will give libraries and other users greater knowledge when they are deciding which subscriptions to take”. These and the copious number of other recommendations are currently being hotly debated in boardrooms, Vice-Chancellors’ offices and across the airwaves, and there is little doubt that the lobbyists from both ‘sides’ are working hard to get their voices heard by Government.

UKSG is delighted to have secured the Chair of the Committee, Dr Ian Gibson MP, to speak at a seminar focusing on the report on 23 November in

London. A whole host of eminent speakers from across the spectrum of our industry will be speaking – Tom Graham, Ann Okerson, Jan Velterop, Stephen Pinfield, Martin Richardson and Bob Campbell. Book quickly because spaces are limited and (unsurprisingly) it is filling up quickly.

In this issue we introduce a new feature which is ‘a day in the life’ of a professional working in our industry. Our first mini-profiles are of Marion Tattersall from the University of Sheffield and Ross MacIntyre from the (new) University of Manchester. Both work with electronic resources, but from almost the opposite ends. Their fascinating working days serve to highlight the problems that we serials professionals are all having to deal with, and the need for additional areas of expertise. With many publishers and aggregators now COUNTER compliant, it is becoming possible at last to measure usage consistently and to see patterns of usage emerging. This means that both publishers and users can start to assess the value of the publications to the subscribers. Your Editors are involved in two different studies commissioned by JISC to look at the usage patterns and the business models of electronic journals, and some of the information that is being studied and modelled really shows how complex these issues can be, often in the areas of licensing terms and conditions. It is clear that there will be no easy and revelatory answers, but UKSG is still one of the few places where all the participants in this industry can get together and work through these problems from all angles.