

Profile of your Eds

Helen Henderson and Hazel Woodward

Helen Henderson and Hazel Woodward (fondly known as H&H) have been co-editors of *Serials* for an amazing ten years. During that time they have interviewed countless information professionals for the Profiles sections of *Serials*. Now it is their turn to be under the spotlight.

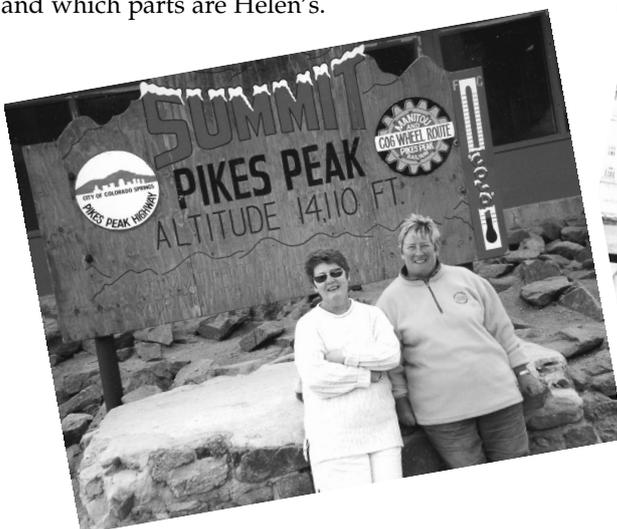
Hazel and Helen are retiring, as co-editors Steve Sharp and Lorraine Estelle are taking over from 2011. The incoming co-editors met up with the outgoing for this interview, and were keen to ask H&H for their reflections on the past ten years – and for a few words of advice.

First, the new co-editors wanted to know about the most enjoyable and interesting aspects of the role. H&H were unanimous in saying that the great support they have had from the UKSG staff and committee has made the job so pleasurable. They have both enjoyed the diversity of issues and meeting so many different people across the information sectors. H&H also agreed that working together and getting to know each other has been a perk of the job. Hazel comes from the library world and Helen from the commercial world. Their differing perspective has been a real strength in the partnership. Yet, despite their different backgrounds, H&H have had an amazing consensus. So much so, that although each writes half of each editorial, no one is able to identify which parts are Hazel's and which parts are Helen's.

They also agreed that the 'free hand' given to them by UKSG has allowed them to be creative. Hazel has enjoyed developing other aspects of the UKSG publication programme and is particularly proud of *The E-Resources Management Handbook*, which as an open access publication is a tool used by the entire information industry. Helen is especially proud of her 'baby', *Serials-eNews*, a pioneering electronic newsletter. Helen has also enjoyed being the first to get the news when the press releases drop into her inbox.

Having heard about the interesting and fun aspects of the role, Lorraine and Steve wanted to know about the worst aspects of the job they have just taken on. H&H practically cackled as they told the incoming co-editors about the stream of e-mails, the constant deadlines, and always worrying about the next edition. Lorraine and Steve could only take comfort from the fact that H&H seem to look particularly good after ten years of this sort of stress.

The incoming editors asked H&H about that transformation that has happened in the information industry over the past ten years. "The biggest



change”, said Helen, “is that *Serials* isn’t about just serials any more. Ten years ago, *Serials* focused almost exclusively on scholarly journals, but now at least half the content in each edition is on other aspects on digital information: e-books, mass-digitization, institutional repositories and much else”. Hazel explained that is why one of the last tasks of the outgoing editors will be to run a competition to find a new name for *Serials*. (Watch out for the competition details on lis-e-resources in the New Year. The winning name will be announced at the UKSG conference in 2011 and implemented from 2012.)

Helen pointed out that another major change has been the decline in business of those subscription agents that were just unable to change quickly enough with the times. However, this has led to new opportunities, for other agents and especially for consortia, which are now able to negotiate directly with the publisher.

“The results of those negotiations, the ‘big deal’, has resulted in a complete change in the landscape”, said Hazel. “The past ten years has been a fantastic time for libraries, the move from title-by-title selection to the wide access provided by the big deals has been a resounding success, providing researchers with desk-top access to more information than ever before.” Hazel wonders, though, what the future will look like as we move into more economically challenging times in which libraries will face tough choices about what they can and cannot afford.

The new co-editors wanted to know about the changes still bubbling under the surface: what have been the hot issues that have just not come to the boil? H&H agreed that open access has been surprisingly long in gestation. Helen noted that it is not the philosophy of open access that has taken

the time, but the enduring question of business models. Hazel pointed out that we all know that scholarly communication is crucial for research, and thus the quality of peer review, but the question remains as to who pays for it. How do you find the right model? There is simply insufficient agreement between all the interested parties to make a single model work which brings all the strengths of traditional publishing, such as peer review, editorial control and quality assurance.

Talking about future trends, Hazel pointed out that in the library world the information environment has been changing rapidly over the last decade, moving from a very library-centric to a much more user-centric view of the world and service provision. Google, of course, has been the other major factor for change in the last ten years, transforming the way in which libraries provide services for their customers. However, both H&H are surprised that Google Scholar, although well used, has not taken off to the degree they might have expected when it was launched. Hazel sees a future that continues to be driven forward by technology to create a more seamless service with less perceived barriers. And, of course, in this changing information landscape, users will need information professionals even more to guide them in their search for quality information. The role of the information profession will be to enhance that.

Helen picked up on the vendor side of the equation, pointing out that the job is becoming increasingly demanding with a focus on a much wider skills set than ever before. Information professionals need to have marketing skills, knowledge of basic legal procedures, sales skills, and more general skills to help provide support for the new information products. In very similar



ways, librarians are taking on a range of new skills. In essence, they are no longer just librarians, they are managing and running a small company!

Returning to the library perspective, Hazel pointed out that the future looks much more collaborative. Libraries are no longer islands, and must continue to work much more closely with each other, with publishers and aggregators to develop and improve services. The rise of collaborative ventures such as UKRR, ALPSP's Learned Journals Collection, CrossRef and ORCID demonstrate a clear need for this joined-up thinking. Helen pointed out how important ORCID is to libraries and research institutions, and how, as we move further into the digital world, working together to establish agreed data standards across the industry will become so much more important.

The incoming co-editors wanted to know if H&H see a future for print, either for journals or books. Hazel sees no future for scholarly journals in print! Though a few niche journals may remain in print format, the vast majority will be available only as electronic content. Certainly, in the areas of research, learning and teaching, Hazel sees most content being accessed electronically. She went on to query the assumption that 'people love books', musing over whether that is just people of a certain generation and questioning whether students of the future will even recognize a printed book or journal.

Helen countered this by saying that the older generation tend to travel more, and (certainly amongst her circle of friends) love using their Kindles on the move. She agreed with Hazel that academic publishing may see a definite shift towards electronic provision, but felt that the recreational reading market and the high-end, prestige market, e.g. coffee table art books, etc., would survive in print. However, this may, in part,

be due to the fact that printing technology is still not capable of accurately reproducing artworks in sufficiently high quality.

And what becomes of our wonderful libraries full of books and bound journals? Helen jokingly saw them becoming coffee shops and social spaces for 'learning interaction'. Hazel added that they could offer users Kindles to do some reading while having a coffee – maybe even a return to the medieval idea of chained libraries, only now with chained Kindles!

The new co-editors asked H&H what they plan to do with all their free time.

After much laughter, Hazel said that she had just had her first proper golf lesson, so is looking forward to spending more time on the golf course, perfecting her swing. And definitely plans on playing more tennis. Helen was looking forward to working shorter hours and sleeping more.

Finally, Steve and Lorraine wanted to know if H&H had any words of advice for the incoming Editors. Hazel laughed, and suggested that they 'Run for the hills!'

Helen offered some very useful hints. Divide responsibilities to play to individual strengths, and avoid duplication of effort. Above all, communicate a lot. Keep an open mind and don't ignore an opportunity. But, keep a sense of perspective, and don't take it too seriously.

Finally, don't forget how valuable the Publications Associate is and how much hard work she carries out in order to get *Serials* out three times a year!

'We are sure you realize that we had great fun creating our photo ops over the years and it was difficult to select our favourites, but they include Pikes Peak Colorado, Henley Regatta, Prague, Cedar Key Florida and of course, Iceland'. [Also included: Ally's favourite, of Helen (on left) helping Hazel (on right) celebrate her MBE.]

