EDITORIAL
Prices, reviews and Leeds

Two topics figure prominently in this second issue of *Serials*: pricing and periodicals reviews. The papers from the March Annual Conference are to form part of our coverage in *Serials* and in this issue we include, amongst other papers, two conference presentations on journal pricing themes. In this vein we also have a report from Dick Young at Southampton University Library and coverage of the Southern Universities Purchasing Consortium one-day meeting, at which views on journal costs and university funding were vigorously aired.

Periodicals reviews are covered by an article by Judy Palmer and Lois Sill from Rothamsted Experimental Station and by reports from Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh and The Queen's College Glasgow.

Our thanks to those who completed and returned the questionnaire we included in the March issue. This gave us useful feedback and a report on the replies is given below.

We have been delighted to receive unsolicited contributions from members - reports on library activities as well as letters. Please continue to send anything you feel might be of interest - news and developments, your views and opinions. They need not always be serious and earnest - in this issue, Pion's contribution to April Fool's Day finds a welcome slot (and an appeal for a regular humorous page).

Since our last issue of *Serials*, members with enough money in their Conference budgets have of course enjoyed the pleasure of Leeds at our annual 'bash'. Our thanks to Pat Napier for her report on the Conference. The photos we include in this issue (courtesy of various people and bodies including Brian Cox of Pergamon, MCB University Press and Richard Savory of Swets) will no doubt revive delegates' memories of the 'winding down' sessions at the end of each hard day's work and give others a glimpse of the interaction between the participants in the serials world.

The proceedings of this year's conference will not be published as a separate monograph, as has been the practice in the past. Four of the papers and workshop reports are published in this issue of *Serials* and the others will appear in future issues.

Our thanks not only to contributors but also of course to our advertisers.

SERIALS - Your views and suggestions

Our thanks to those members who took the time to complete and return the questionnaire included with the March issue. In total we received 31 replies - 7 from commercial members, 1 from a private member and the remainder from libraries.

On one area there was unanimous agreement - that we hadn't quite got it right with regard to white spaces and black lines and that underlining of words looked wrong. Our excuse is that it was our first attempt at using the desktop publishing software and had we had more time (and practice) at our disposal we would have been able to improve it. Unfortunately our 'real' jobs made unrealistic demands on our time. Hopefully this issue gives a better impression.

Other areas of agreement: put authors' names on Contents Page (done); group articles together and try to show a clearer definition between sections (hopefully now done but sometimes we need to fill up white spaces with news items); don't bother to include details of new periodicals - apart from 'library' related titles; try to include a few more photographs (done, but please note that the photographs in this issue are nearly all amateur snapshots).

Whilst readers seemed happy in general with the structure of the journal (no single section, for example, was criticised by the vast majority of respondents), there was a huge variation in the opinions of the individual contents and therefore few general conclusions could be drawn. Readers liked the inclusion and format of the Diary, but rightly reminded us that we had not included certain important meetings e.g. those of NAG or indeed some of our own seminars. One or two articles were said by one or two respondents to lean towards sales puffs, but as we do not have

the "journalists" to undertake in-depth interviews with commercial members, we rely to a great extent on the material sent to us (even though we edit it).

The 'letters' section was welcomed (even though we only had one letter) and considered potentially valuable - so please let's have some more.

Suggestions for possible articles and sections included: CD ROM, automation in subscription agents, serials automation, measuring usage of journals, why publishers introduce new titles, comparison of computer programmes, statistics on prices, agents' pricing policies, news from particular libraries, binding policies, news from Europe.

Some of these we are covering by way of conference papers or original articles but other contributions in these areas would always be considered for publication.

Not every specific comment or reply can be included here but samples of some of those received included:

"Congratulations on a lively and interesting first issue"

"Useful and fun" (News section)

"I hope *Serials* (including advertisers) is to be indexed eventually"

"... I noted a number of misspellings/typing errors"

"Are there events in the North?" (Diary)

"Need a few more personal details to make it more interesting - especially to nosey old bats like me" (Profile)

"Clear and easy to read. I was favourably impressed"

"Congratulations to the editorial board on a great vol. 1 no. 1"

"Hopefully topical articles will prompt more of them" (Letters)

"Other than a few spelling mistakes, a most attractive journal"

"Bit boring - not very useful" (People)

"Compliments on layout"

"Spice up the editorial ... to provide a basis for discussion in the letters section"

"Try not to poach on the ground of *British Journal of Serials Librarianship*" (articles) (I hope we can be forgiven for ignoring this latter piece of advice)

Our thanks in particular to one member who gave us at least 3 pages of useful suggestions and criticisms.

Albert Prior
Editor