

THE EDITORS

P.O. Box 567

Newsletter No. 3. July 1979

Neutral Bay Junction 2089

REPORT ON LAST MEETING

On 20 June the subject of our last meeting was Literary Agents. To our knowledge there are now three agents in Sydney and they all kindly agreed to attend our meeting.

Tim Curnow of Curtis Brown Australia Pty. Ltd. and Rosemary Creswell addressed the meeting and were joined by Barbra Mobbs (also of Curtis Brown) and Judy Barry on the panel. Unfortunately, due to illness, Anne Ingram was unable to chair the discussions.

Despite the petrol shortage and the temptations of the Film Festival, over thirty people attended and many members contributed to the lively questions and discussion.

Jim Robins chaired the meeting and first of all gave a brief run-down on the members of the panel.

TIM CURNOW, CURTIS BROWN

After working as postman and packer of Penguin books, Tim Curnow spent three years bookselling in Auckland. In 1966 he was appointed Educational Editor for AH & AW Reed in Wellington and in 1970 moved to Sydney as Managing Editor for Reeds in Australia. In 1971 he was appointed Managing Director of Curtin Brown Australia Pty. Ltd, a subsidiary of the Curtis Brown Group, London.

BARBARA MOBBS, CURTIS BROWN

Barbra joined Tim in 1971 and was made a director of the company last year. She was previously with George Rainbird Books in London where she was a contemporary of Edmund Fisher. On returning to Australia she joined Ure Smith who sent her to Hong Kong to their production office. During her seven years with Curtis Brown she has spent long stretches in their London office.

ROSEMARY CRESWELL

Rosemary Creswell worked for approximately ten years in the field of advertising, public relations and promotion. She then entered the academic world and gained a PhD in English literature and taught in the English Department at Sydney University for a number of years. She has also worked in a number of bookshops and has done some freelance editing for Sydney and Melbourne book publishers. Working for the Department of Corrective services, she started and was the editor for the first

statewide prisoners newspaper, INPRINT. During this she took creative writing workshops in prisons. Rosemary has written many book reviews for newspapers and magazines.

Six months ago she started her own literary agency in partnership with Richard Hall and Malcolm Rogers.

JUDY BARRY

In the 1960s Judy was an advertising agency TV radio commercials producer. She was assistant director and sound recordist on four major foreign affairs documentaries filmed in Europe for Channel 9's Project '65 series. She then became managing partner of a production company producing commercials, industrial documentaries, etc.

Late in 1968 she returned to London where she had a spell as a TV commercials producer for a film company, after which she decided to move away from production and into the area of management and administration and joined a film company as the executive secretary and personal assistant to the Managing Director. At the beginning of 1972, after a number of months living in Greece, she returned to London to help form and set up a new film production company specialising in animation of which she was a director and company secretary.

Judy returned to Australia about five years ago and worked as a freelance film production manager. She was associated with the ABC's TV Drama Department working with the script editor on a long-running weekly TV serial. This was followed by 18 months working with the General Manager of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust before starting her own business as a writers' agent. She has been doing this now for more than 18 months. She also represents the London authors' agent, Harvey Unna & Stephen Dunbridge Ltd.

Tim Curnow was the first speaker. Curtin Brown has now been established in Australia for ten years and although it is a subsidiary of Curtis Brown in London (which in turn is actually owned by a merchant bank) the primary task of the Australian company is to represent Australian artists and writers in Australia.

According to Tim, many writers regard writing as a "cross to bear" and seek agents for a degree of stability and continuity in their work. Agents in turn are able to keep records throughout the writers' careers and provide some form of continuity.

Tim feels that it is imperative for agents to have personal enthusiasm and belief in their writers. He represents a wide range of authors with a great diversity of activities. They vary in age from their mid-twenties to their eighties, and he also manages several estates such as those of Norman Lindsay and Martin Boyd. Some of his writers work in several media e.g. films, newspaper/magazine articles, plays, etc.

Curtis Brown have often been approached to act for directors and producers (as "flesh" agents) but they do not seek this type of client as it can lead to a conflict of interest, e.g. when representing a playwright and a director, it would be impossible to act in both their interests should they both be involved in the same play.

He spoke of the relationship he has with publishers, stressing the importance of understanding the varying tastes of editors so that he can offer them the right kinds of books. Apart from his obvious role as representing authors to publishers, he also provides writers for particular projects at the request of publisher:

Rosemary Creswell, our other speaker, related her experience during the last six months since she started acting as an agent. Together with her two partners, Richard Hall and Malcolm Rogers, she has a wide range of contacts and can provide publishers with authors for most types of books. She is shortly to set up reciprocal arrangements with other agents in New York and London.

She has also set up a marketing service for publishers of educational books. She can supply lists of all courses relevant to any particular book together with the enrolment of these courses and the likelihood of adoption. This should assist publishers in estimating print runs.

After Rosemary Creswell had addressed the meeting it was thrown open for questions. It was interesting to learn that only 4% of Australian authors are represented by agents whereas in New York and London the figures are approximately 90-95% and 75% respectively.

Tim Curnow said that of the many novelists represented by agents, most have two or three books published before they approach an agent. The recent upsurge of small publishers and the agents' attitude to them was discussed. Curtis Brown feel that it is in their authors' interest to negotiate with well-established publishers. For this reason he would therefore probably prefer to deal with the larger companies.

One question raised was the size of the advance that agents seek for their authors. Their answer was that they try wherever possible to obtain approximately one-third of the total royalty envisaged in the first print run, in the belief that if the publisher is not counting on selling the first third of the print run he shouldn't be publishing the book. The average advance obtained, is, however, \$500-\$750.

After listening to the speakers and the discussion that followed, people generally felt that they had a clearer view of the role of literary agents in the publishing industry.

COLONIAL PARANOIA

We're sure you will all be interested to read the reply to our letter addressed to Rigby enquiring about their advertisement in the British Bookseller. This letter was read out at the last meeting and members appeared to be satisfied with the explanation.

Dear Barbara,

Thank you for your letter of 28 May. My apologies for this delayed reply. I have been away.

The explanation of 'The Bookseller' advertisement is quite simple and rather annoying.

I expect you know something about the Rigby problems of the past year or so, until we were taken over by Reed Consolidated Industries in March.

During the upheavals of 1978, a management consultant was appointed as our 'chief executive'. He served in that capacity from 1 October 1978 until 31 March 1979.

At about the time of the takeover, we were discussing our possible need for additional publishing staff. I drew up an advertisement for use in Australian newspapers. He believed it should be inserted in 'The Bookseller' also.

From my point of view, the matter had not been decided when I left for a two weeks' visit to Singapore and Hong Kong printers, late in March. In my absence, he arranged for insertion of the advertisement.

When I returned, the Publishing Department was somewhat reorganised under our new management. (To my complete satisfaction, I might add!)

This reorganisation eliminated the need for additional staff, at least for the time being. Consequently the advertisement was not placed in Australian newspapers.

Suffice it to say that its appearance in 'The Bookseller' has proved embarrassing because it attracted a good many applications.

I hope that the above makes everything clear.

Your new association sounds interesting and worthwhile. Our people here would be interested in further information, please.

With Kind Regards,
RIGBY LIMITED

M.F. PAGE
Publishing Manager

FREELANCE REGISTER

The deadline for inclusion has now passed, and the following people are listed on it:

Christine Astley-Boden, 477 Crown Street, Surry Hills, 2010
Tel: 698 1645, 699 0111.
Derek Barton, 36 Lombard Street, Glebe, 2037
Tel: 660 8420
Roger Coates, 4/18 Royston Street, Kings Cross, 2011.
Tel: 31 3839
Denise Faithfull Domingo, 1/17 Plumer Road, Rose Bay 2029
Tel: 368 133.
Irna Dunn, 2/66 Derwent Street, Glebe, 2037
Tel: 660 1457
John Goode, P O Box 191, Glebe, 2037 Tel: 660 2901
Jacqueline Kent, 173A Seaforth Crescent, Seaforth, 2092
Tel: 949 1296
Jeremy A. Fisher, 22 Sorrie Street, Balmain, 2041
Tel: 822 127, 6606055 (work)
Vere Kenny, 14 Ryder Street, Surry Hills, 2010
Tel: 33 4753, 699 0111 x 230 (work)
Colin J. McKay, 1.45 Prospect Road, Summer Hill, 2130
Tel: 798 8596
Kate Scheinman, 28 Chisholm Street, Darlinghurst, 2010
Tel: 31 7340
Jane Morgan, "Merri", Scotland Island, Via Church Point, 2105
Tel: 997 5993
Margaret Norman, 1 Benelong Road, Cremorne, 2090
Tel: 90 1914
Anne Savage, 33 Cranstons Road, Dural, 2158
Tel: 651 1014
Judith Dine (nee Byrne), 179 Boundary Street, East Roseville, 2069
Tel: 407 0246
Philip Wheeler, 56 Fitzroy Street, Surry Hills, 2010
Tel: 357 5875
Jonathan Shaw, 53 Coleridge Street, Leichhardt, 2040
Tel: 560 7949, 82 1809 (Penny's)
Judy Vago, 55/372 Edgecliff Road, Woollahra, 2025
Tel: 326 1253 (H), 230 0244 x 518 (W)
Sue Wagner, 1/62 Grosvenor Street, Neutral Bay 2089
Tel: 90 2422
Jutta Sieverding, 4/1 Morrison Road, Gladesville, 2111
Tel: 89 3788 (H), 268 2202 (w) until 25/7/79

Copies of the register have been sent to all Managing Editors or their equivalent in Sydney Publishing houses, as well as to the Society of Editors in Melbourne.

Names of those editors, designers and illustrators who would like to be added to the register will be published in future newsletters.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

We think an annotated bibliography of professional titles would be a useful tool, but we would appreciate your help. If you have found any books of particular interest/use, please send your recommendations together with some comments on same to Elaine Russell.

MEMBERSHIP

Lack of space prevents a full listing of members names and addresses in this issue. Hopefully, next issue.

CONSTITUTION

A copy of our new Proposed Constitution is enclosed with this newsletter. Any comments/suggestions are welcomed.

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, August 1, Kirribilli

SUBSIDIARY RIGHTS

PANEL

Peter Corris, Literary Editor, National Times

Barbara Ker Wilson, Readers Digest

(probably)

Alison Rowe, ABC Copyright Department

Please Note:

Drinks served from 6.00 pm;

Meeting starts 7.00 pm sharp.

FOLLOWING MEETINGS

12 September

A.J.A. editors award

24 October

we are hoping to arrange
Production Managers/Editors, and invite
members of the Galley Club.

NEW PROPOSED CONSTITUTION - THE EDITORS

1. *The name of this organisation shall be The Editors.*
2. *The purposes of this organisation shall be : to maintain and develop standards of editorial skills; to hold meetings, the purpose of which is to discuss subjects of particular interest to book editors; to promote the exchange and dissemination of information and ideas among book editors.*
3. *The editors shall be a non-sectarian, and non-party political, non-profitmaking organisation.*
4. *Membership of this organisation is open to:*
 - (a) Any employee/employer who is engaged full or part-time in any aspect of book editing;*
 - (b) any self-employed book editor;*
 - (c) any former editor in either of the above categories.*
5. *Membership is open to anyone satisfying the conditions set out in Clause 4 above who pays the annual subscription fee due on 1 February each year.*
6. *If a member's subscription remains unpaid for over two calendar months, that member will be given 14 days' notice that he/she will cease to be a member. Any person who so forfeits membership may appeal to the committee.*
7. *There shall be a Committee composed of:*
 - 1 President, 2 Secretaries; 2 Treasurers (Membership and Catering); 2 other members responsible for newsletters and information.*
8. *The Committee shall conduct and manage all the business and affairs of The Editors and may co-opt other members of the organisation to form sub-committees for special purposes.*
9. *There shall be an Annual General Meeting held as soon as possible after 1 February each year. At least 14 days notice of this meeting shall be given to all financial members. This notice shall include any resolutions to be proposed at the Annual General Meeting as well as nominations papers for a new Committee. The election of the Committee shall be held at*

the Annual General Meeting.

- 10. The Constitution may be amended by a resolution at any general meeting, provided that notice of the proposal to amend the Constitution is given in the notice of such meeting.*
- 11. The funds of The Editors shall be banked in the name of The Editors with two Treasurers and two other committee members authorised to operate the account.*
- 12. A qualified auditor shall be appointed by the Committee and shall examine all accounts. The auditors report shall be tabled at the Annual General Meeting.*
- 13. The financial year shall conclude on 31 January each year.*
- 14. One-third of the membership shall constitute a quorum to vote on any resolution at a meeting.*
- 15. In any winding-up process, after the settlement of all liabilities, any other moneys will be paid to another organisation with similar objectives, as decided by a general meeting.*