



# THE EDITORS

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P.O. Box 567,  
Neutral Bay Junction 2089

OCTOBER 1981

NEXT MEETING . . . NEXT MEETING . . . NEXT MEETING. . .

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 28 October, at 7 p.m.  
at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli.

Please RSVP to Narelle Konte, 888 2733, by Monday, 26 October.

SUBJECT: The Macquarie Dictionary

SPEAKERS: Sue Butler Kevin Weldon

## Last meeting

The last meeting of The Editors was a most successful and enjoyable review of publishing in the "good old days" and the way the industry (and the editor's role in it) has changed. Our speaker was Sam Ure-Smith who gave us a lively account of the inception and development of his own publishing house.

Begun by Sam's father very early in the century, the company initially concentrated on art-oriented publications, achieving excellent colour reproduction from a three-colour letterpress machine (no black). All colour was hand-corrected by artists. Early copies of Art in Australia (100 issues published between 1916 and 1942) were sold for an \$8 subscription fee. Complete sets are now collectors' items, fetching around \$8000!

In 1932, Ure-Smith merged with the Sydney Morning Herald, but the exercise proved unsuccessful. They parted ways in 1938, and Ure-Smith began to publish limited editions of Art in Australia material (runs of 15 or 20).

In 1939, Sam joined his father briefly in the business, and returned to it after the war, taking over completely in 1949.

The war years placed a great strain on the company, and paper shortages forced reduction in the size of publications. Throughout this period, editor Gwen Morgan-Spencer was a major force in the company's survival. Part of her plan was to expand into general publishing.

When she left in 1949, Mervyn Houghton took over as editor. The fifties proved a strong developmental period in Australian publishing, with editors such as Alec Chisholm and Beatrice Davis wielding a great deal of influence over what was published and in what style. Chisholm believed strongly that an editor should not intrude upon the style of an author.

During this period Ure-Smith boomed, with the publication of the best-selling general title, They're a Weird Mob (which has sold well over a million copies). In those days it was economically possible to advertise by sending personal telegrams to selected members of the public.

Alec Bolton took over as editor at Ure-Smith in the late fifties and achieved such successes as Breaker Morant. He was operating in the heyday of publishing when editors decided on what was to be published and how, and the marketing people had to cope with it. (Sam did admit that the current marketing-oriented trend need not necessarily be all bad.)

In the sixties, Ure-Smith put in seven successful years in a merger with Horwitz and was then sold to Hamlyn (UK). After ten years in that alliance, Sam "retired" and is once again publishing Art and Australia.

With several decades of Australian publishing behind him, Sam still believes in an oft-quoted axiom of his father: "Publishers are like frame-makers - they should enhance the picture but not alter it."

Smoking

At the last meeting, some people objected to members smoking during the meeting. Notice of motion was given that at the next meeting a motion will be put that members refrain from smoking while the guests are speaking. This subject is a very emotive one and tempers on both sides can get frayed. The committee discussed this and recommends that nothing be formalised, but that smokers be asked to sit at the rear of the room - near the balcony door and the wine.

Freelance register

Please amend your register as follows:

Margaret Olds (Matrix Words into Print), 17/9-13 Hampden Avenue, Cremorne, 2090. Phones: 90 6315 264 2671.

An addendum to the register will be distributed to all publishers early in the new year. If you wish to update the information or to correct any mistakes, please send it to the secretary by 1 February 1982, together with \$2 if you are a member, \$5 if you are not.

Christmas party

This will be held on Friday, 4 December, at 7 p.m., at the Mosman Rowing Club. The club has a new caterer and some members of the committee have tasted the food and pronounced it fit. Booking details will be announced in next month's newsletter.

Position vacant

Golden Press require a full-time acquisitions editor for their educational list, Shakespeare Head Press. A suitable person for this job would be familiar with the education system at primary and/or secondary school level and have previous teaching and/or publishing experience. This is a senior position and salary and working condition will be attractive. Contact Elaine Russell, Golden Press, 2-12 Tennyson Rd, Gladesville, NSW 2111. Ph. (02) 89 0421.