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INTERNATIONAL DATELINE

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The Little Brother is Growing Up: The London International Book Fair by Richard Abel

roughly twenty-five years ago, several small UK book publishers mounted a tiny book trade show in a mutual effort to boost their sales. As small specialist publishers, theirs was an up-hill battle not only to receive a hearing from booksellers but for space on bookstore shelves in the face of the near overwhelming marketing capabilities of the large and/or established houses. The thought was that such a special show might compensate in some measure for their relative lack of marketing clout. The first show was held in a meeting room of a London hotel to which the UK bookselling community was invited.

Each year, for the next several, their trade show, soon bearing the grandiose title, **The London Book Fair**, was declared a success. But the mounting of the succeeding Fair always seemed problematic. Only with an enormous exertion of time and effort by a thin handful of dedicated individuals did the next stagger into being. Despite all the difficulties and the problematic issue of the Fair's continued existence, an increasing number of UK publishers took space and increasing numbers of booksellers attended.

In time, thanks in part to its scheduling roughly six months after the internationally indispensable **Frankfurt Book Fair**, overseas book publishers, first from Europe and then from North America, began to use it as a rights trading venue. Thus, those publishers possessed of a sense of not only the reality but of the importance of the international trade in books could assemble on a common ground twice a year to engage in the time-honored convention — one dating back to before the emergence of the printed book — of exchanging books and rights in books.

The **British Booksellers Association** has "from time immemorial" mounted a publishers' exhibit in connection with their annual meeting. British publishers exhibited not so much to sell books but rather as a public relations gesture and a token of fellowship with their bookselling compatriots. As with the **American Booksellers Association** annual meeting, the BA meeting was a movable feast being held each year at a different location.

Within the last several years two notable developments came together to reshape the **London International Book Fair** and give it its present form. First, **Reed Exhibitions** purchased the Fair from its previous owners. The mere fact of the purchase by an international organization devoted to presenting trade fairs was a significant statement of the worth of the Fair and of its stature in the book trade. The Fair was henceforth to be operated as one of a number of profit centers by a professional company versed in the arcane principles of promoting and mounting trade shows.

Secondly, the BA last year decided to hold its annual meeting in conjunction with the Fair. This decision led, in turn, to two major outcomes: the BA annual meeting was permanently fixed in London, and what were two yearly publishers' parades of their lists have been reduced to one. The expectation seems to be that much more of the dealing between the UK publishers and their bookstore outlets, both domestic and foreign, will be conducted in this aug-

mented venue.

So the **LIBF** has evolved into a quite remarkable annual event and has taken on the principal characteristics of its counterparts in Germany and the US. This is to say all have become a primary place for the domestic book-trade of each country to conduct much of its business and secondly all have, by virtue of the operation of pressures of the international market, become significant venues for the international trading of books and rights to books. Both the UK and the US marketplaces will remain minor players in the international rights game relative to the central role of Frankfurt. But they will continue to play an increasingly important part as consequential seasonal way stations between the annual in-gatherings of the book tribe at Frankfurt.

The **LIBF** was the largest such event to date. Some numbers: 923 publishers were exhibiting; attendance was up about 4% over last year to 1,200 plus; something on the order of 20% of both exhibitors and attendees were from overseas. The Fair remained remarkably busy for the entire three days unlike the longer Fairs where many of the principals seem to wear out after the fourth day — retreating home or to less hectic surrounds. Virtually all publishers concerned with rights seemed to be well satisfied with the deals initiated or tied up at the **LIBF**. The UK publishers were almost uniformly disappointed in the volume of orders placed by domestic booksellers. So it was for some a mixed bag relative to expectations.

UK librarians attended in large numbers. Most seem to use the **LIBF** as a showcase where much of current British book output can be quickly reviewed and its suitability for acquisition assessed in a setting where comparative judgments are facilitated. The **Blackwell** library group mounted a wine and cheese soiree for librarians which succeeded in choking traffic on the balcony gallery for several hours. No report from the large adjoining **Penguin** exhibit as to whether visits to their booth increased or were reduced thanks to the crowd of librarians — some well into their cups before the shindig closed.

An unremitting procession of seminars, workshops and presentations were offered in adjoining rooms. They ranged from meetings devoted to thrashing out definitions for the emerging **EDIFACT EDI** format to the display of virtual reality software games. Most were well attended. There were only occasional lapses into the kind of hype and glitz which seem a continuing and disturbing feature of the **ABA Convention**.

The **LIBF** is a remarkably comfortable book fair to work by comparison with Frankfurt. This is clearly the consequence of fewer exhibitors and attendees. One need not run obstacle courses formed of hopelessly jammed crowds to get to another building for the next half-hour appointment. The easier pace seems to produce in its wake an easier negotiating atmosphere which is always welcome.

I have never understood why North American library acquisition

continued on page 71

tions and collection development people — particularly those working in the larger institutions — are so seldom to be seen at the **Frankfurt Book Fair**. That massive annual amalgamation of the world's book output provides an unparalleled insight into virtually every aspect of the world of books: what is being published; the direction of scholarly activity around the world; the movement of prices; the rise and fall of passing fashions — both scholarly and

lay; and on and on. It seems to me that Frankfurt furnishes any person involved with the universe of books a broad-brush understanding of the principal lineaments of that universe unequalled by any other means. But the same kind can hardly be said of the **LIBF**. The latter is an interesting place for a visiting librarian who happens to be in London or has a particular interest in the UK trade, one akin to that of UK librarians, for example.

Celebration of Maori Language, Book Awards and More . . .

by **Gita Gunatilleke** (Head of Collection Management, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand)
(gita.gunatilleke@vuw.ac.nz)

The 'Taonga te Reo' 1995 is Maori language year and various celebrations are taking place throughout New Zealand this year. Photographs of the Maori Biographies from the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* are the subject of an exhibition which successfully traveled to several libraries. Librarians and booksellers have welcomed new and revised publications including Maori Language kits which have become available this year. Just to confuse us librarians who select titles for collections, there are two Maori-English, English-Maori dictionaries of modern Maori by **P.M. Ryan**. One is a revised edition of a 1989 work and has over 15,000 entries, and the other a much larger work has over 40,000 entries.

Yes, it is that time of the year and entries are piling up for New Zealand's Book awards. **Whai Ngata**, one of the three 1995 Montana judges states that Maori writing features strongly in Montana Book Awards. All those concerned with Maori culture and language have been pleased to see the impressive number of entries for books written by Maori and about Maori which have entered the competition. They include a number of titles by award-winning author **Witi Ihimaera**, regional and district histories, portraits of women, autobiographies, and a Maori-English dictionary.

The short list has appeared for the **NZLIA's** 1995 Children's Book awards which are scheduled for Friday 23 June and will be part of New Zealand library week. This year there was also a new supreme award called the 'AIM Book of the Year' which recog-

nized the strength of children's writing in New Zealand. The winner of the prize of NZ\$5,000 went to **Maurice Gee** for his picture book *Fat Man* and was selected from all four categories of Picture Book, Junior Fiction, Senior Fiction and Non-fiction.

In February 1995 'Nga Whakaatarunga' a joint project between **Victoria University of Wellington** and the **Waitangi Tribunal** was launched. 'Nga Whakaatarunga' is the microfiche edition of the Tribunal's *Records of Documents and Submissions* of registered claims heard or reported. The first series covering claims WAI 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17, 22, 27, 32, 33 and also 150 (includes Wai 26) is now available at NZ\$795.00 per set + 33.50 packing and postage. For further information and order forms please contact me on email or Fax (04) 4712 070 (NZ).

The Emergence of Pan-Asian International Book Fairs

by **James Borton**

James Borton is the founding editor & publisher of the quarterly journal, New Asia Review. He is also the author of the book, published by Probus, Venture Japan: How Growing Companies Can Tap Into Japanese Venture Capital Markets. He can be reached at his publishing cottage based in Westport, CT at (203) 222-9734 or e-mail AsiaReview@aol.com.

A few months ago, I attended the **Tokyo International Book Fair**, an occasion now on a par with the **Frankfurt Book Fair** in financial importance and international foreign rights developments. Held in Makuhari, a suburb an hour by train from downtown Tokyo, the fair attracted thousands of Japanese and over 900 exhibitors, with almost 400 from overseas. Most of these attendees seemed not the least bit

distracted about any seismic geologic faults. In the wake of the tragic Kobe earthquake experienced earlier in the year, the Japanese booksellers seemed to take much solace in the international turnout for their annual book fair.

Although Japan continues to experience its regular tremors and financial reversals, these facts remain rock solid: there is a New Asia and it is the epicenter of the 21st century. This Asian Pacific region with 60% of the world's population continues to increase its literacy rates. Furthermore, the nations of Asia are averaging a growth rate of 7.5% each year. Asian savings are increasing by \$550 billion annually. At this recent Tokyo book fair, I personally observed the direct correlation between improving literacy rates and a demand for books and multimedia products.

In 1994 at this same fair, the **Asian Pacific Publishing Associa-**

continued on page 72

Pan-Asian Book Fairs
from page 71

tion was formally created by 11 of the major book publishing countries. This association's agenda is to establish multilateral cooperation among these countries in Asia. So far, activities of APPA include a training course for publishing personnel in editing, printing, binding, distribution and more. Also, APPA awards a prize for the best translation of an Asian book and co-published works.

Although both the **Association of American Publishers** and the **International Publishers Association** have failed to endorse this new body, my own quarterly journal, *New Asia Review*, introduced in 1994, fully intends to trumpet APPA's successes and showcase future international book fairs in Asia. In fact, *NAR* received the recent endorsement from the **Hong Kong Book & Magazine Publishers Association** to produce a special Hong Kong Book Fair guide for this year's upcoming program to be held in July.

The **Tokyo International Book Fair** has acted as a lightning rod for other Asian countries to develop their own book promotion fairs, attracting formal publishing representatives from Korea, India, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Indonesia and even China. This fair established in 1984 began as a domestic festival to promote books on the mass Japanese market. As the publishing industry developed and business opportunities grew in the Asian countries in recent years, more cooperation among publishers and related organizations became inevitable. Although it is not as large as the Frankfurt Fair, it does embrace one of the largest information centers in Asia Pacific and continues to serve as an international model for other Asian book fairs.

Japan has one of the largest publishing industries in the world. Presently there are more than four thousand book publishers who publishes forty-eight thousand new books and over four thousand magazines. According to **Takao Watanabe**, chairman of the Tokyo International Book Fair, "despite the recent economic recession experienced in Japan during the past three years, the publishing industry is still enjoying a gradual increase of sales and the total turnover last year was \$25 billion (U.S.)"

From my own observations as well as from discussions with book publishers in attendance, I have found that Tokyo offers an attractive venue for foreign rights negotiations. **Katsuyoshi Saito**, Foreign Rights Manager for **Diamond Inc.** (Japan), an international book & magazine publisher, stated "that during this exhibition we actually made deals for several contracts selling rights."

Besides the various Import Book Bargain corners, there were many multi-media products displayed, including CD-ROM, digital publications and various electronic publishing software. *New Asia Review* will continue to review these new products in our quarterly journal.

The conditions for the creation and expansion of a pan-Asian book publishing sphere continue to improve. Coupled with the increased literacy rates and with the extension of copyright protection particularly to China will lead to more ties between North American and Euro-based publishers with their Asian colleagues. The continued development of Asian international book fairs will foster formal international cooperation well into the 21st century.

CALENDAR OF SELECT ASIAN INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIRS:

Seoul Book Fair

17-23 May 1995 Seoul Republic of Korea
Contact: Park Khil-Boo Executive Director, Korean Publishers Association, 105 -2 Sagan-dong Chong-gu Seoul 110-190, Republic of Korea
Tel.: (82) 2 7352702
Fax: (82) 27385414

Hong Kong Book Fair

20-24 July 1995 Hong Kong
Contact: Richard Tam HK Trade Development Council, 219 East 46th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017
Tel.: (212) 838-8688
Fax: (212) 838-8941

Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair

18-27 August 1995 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Contact: Sharifah Farmah Alhabshi, secretary National Book Council of Malaysia Ministry of Education Level 7 Block J Pusat Bandar Damansara 50604 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Tel.: (60) 3 2553535
Fax: (60) 3 2543107

Singapore International Festival of Books & Book Fair

2-10 September 1995
Contact: N.T.S. Chopra Book Fair Director Festival of Books Singapore Pte. Ltd. 37 Jalan Pemimpin #04-02 Union Industrial Bldg. Singapore 2057 Republic of Singapore
Tel.: (65) 353-1101
Fax: (65) 35422

Philippine Book Fair

9-17 September 1995
Contact: Ms. Irene Lloren, The Philippine Bookfair Secretariat
c/o Primetrade Asia, Inc. S-323, Secretariat Bldg. PICC CCP Complex Roxas Blvd. Pasay City 1300, Metro Manila Philippines
Tel.: (63) 2-8313834
Fax: (63) 28310175

Taipei International Book Exhibition

19-24 January 1996
Contact: China Times Publishing Co., 5F 240 Ho-Ping West Road Sec. 3, Taipei, Taiwan ROC
Tel.: 886 2-304-8413
Fax: 886-2-302 7844

New Delhi World Book Fair

3-11 February 1996
National Book Trust, A-5 Green Park, New Delhi, 110 016
Tel: 886-2 304 8413
Fax: 886-2-302-7844