

MICHAEL'S INTRODUCTION

Tonight is a time for celebration. And so I want to say a few words about why we should all feeling upbeat tonight about our industry.

The fact that the pound has been tumbling against the euro and dollar has been the one bit of good economic news we've had in recent months. Although the cost of imported equipment and consumables increases, our exports are cheaper in overseas markets and the books we produce for the home market are more competitively priced than imports from more expensive currency zones.

So the export prospects for British book publishers and manufacturers are looking up, and we should be working harder than ever therefore to highlight the superb value these represent to our overseas customers. To this end, I was delighted to see Butler Tanner and Dennis launch their *Great British Books* marque earlier this month, which is aimed at promoting UK-printed books to consumers. The marque design features a Union Jack-covered book, with the strapline "Great British Books Published & Printed in the UK". I understand that it has already been taken up by some by publishers, and we are recommending its adoption by members of the BPIF's Book Production Special Interest Group.

Now I am well aware that flying the Union Jack will cut little ice with European print buyers, but competitive prices, high quality, and prompt delivery surely will. And that of course is what UK printers need to focus on. But if we can make this new marque synonymous with best value and quality print, then we will have something to really shout about.

There are other challenges of course that publishers and printers alike must now face. At Frankfurt earlier this month, the impact of the e-book was a major topic of discussion. Another was Google's digitisation of, so far, 10m books - including about 9m still protected by copyright. Google's project also includes plans to allow people to buy out-of-print books produced by in-store Espresso printing and binding machines.

Although, sales of downloaded digital books are still relatively small, they are growing fast in key markets such as the US, Japan, South Korea and the UK. Publishers will be increasingly challenged by the digital medium therefore, and printers too will need to start thinking about how e-books can be integrated into their product portfolio as part of a multi-media offering. Of course necessity is the mother of invention too. Book printers will also need to look at how they can enhance their traditional product in the face of competition from its electronic rival. One way of course is to entice the reader with the prospect of a tactile and engaging volume that they can hold in the palm of their hand, and that grips their attention with the sheer style of its look and feel. In short, to do what our finalists tonight have done, which is to produce truly beautiful books.

One thing is for sure though: publishers should not shy away from printing books because of any concerns about the impact of this on our planet. Far from being the eco bully boy, print and paper is leading the way in the manufacturing sector in terms of green practices. We have a great environmental story to tell, and we are one of the world's few truly sustainable industries. Don't just take my word for it, go to a great new website we are supporting called www.twosides.info, which does a fantastic job exploding the myths and setting the industry's record straight. I urge all of you to support the Two Sides campaign, and the website tells you how you can get involved. Once again, that's www.twosides.info

So I hope that you will agree that we do have much to celebrate tonight. And with great food, great entertainment and most importantly great-looking books, we have just what you need to lift your spirits.

I would now like to take this opportunity to thank our sponsors for their generous support of these Awards: Canon, CPI UK, G.A.E. Horizon, KBA, Kolbus, MPG Books Group, Oce, and ROI Digital. I would also like to thank Nathan Taverner, who designed the Book of the Night that you will be taking away with you later. Nathan, who won student of the year last year, has gone from success to success since he was taken on by the Page Design. Together with his colleague Paul Martin, Nathan has gone above and beyond the call of duty, putting his heart and soul into this magnificent catalogue of our winners and finalists. I must also like to thank our

associates: Oxford Brookes University and The Publishers Association. And special thanks must go to our event organiser, Heena Bulsara, for all the hard work she has put into making tonight such a superb occasion.

Now before concluding, I want to take up a rare opportunity to take some money off publishers for a change. And printers too of course. As President of the Printers' Charitable Corporation, it is my great pleasure to introduce our prize draw this evening, which is on behalf of the PCC.

The Printers Charitable Corporation (PCC) is *the* leading charity delivering active support for current and previous employees of the printing and publishing industries. We give assistance in times of need. We extend this vital help to any dependent family members. Anyone with connections to the industry who is in need should contact us.

You will help by taking part tonight in the table draw, when the winner can enjoy a fantastic evening for two at one of the UK's leading restaurants within the D & D London Group.

You will find an envelope for this on your table. Our suggested donation is £10 but feel free to be more generous if you wish. The envelopes will be collected during dinner and the raffle draw will take place before the Awards ceremony.

Enjoy your evening and thank you for your support.