

THE MONOPOLIES AND MERGERS COMMISSION

**Benham Newspapers Ltd
St Regis International Ltd
and
Reed International plc**

A report on the proposed transfer of eight newspapers
owned by Benham Newspapers Ltd and of eleven
newspapers owned by St Regis. International Ltd to
Reed International plc

*Presented to Parliament in pursuance of Section 83
of the Fair Trading Act 1973*

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**Group appointed to discharge the functions of the
Commission in relation to the Benham Newspapers Ltd/
Reed International Ltd investigation**

1. In pursuance of the powers vested in him by virtue of section 4 of the Fair Trading Act 1973 and paragraph 10 of Schedule 3 thereto, the Chairman directed that the functions of the Commission in relation to the Benham Newspapers Ltd/Reed International Ltd reference would be discharged through a group consisting of the following members of the Commission:

Mr J G Ackers
Mr C J M Hardie
Mrs C M Miles
Mr B C Owens
Mr J J Wallis

He further directed that Mr Hardie should act as Chairman of the group.

2. In pursuance of the powers vested in him by virtue of section 4 of the said Act and paragraph 22 of Schedule 3 thereto, the Secretary of State appointed for the purpose of this investigation the following additional members who, by virtue of the said paragraph 22, were also members of the group:

Mr D Churchill
Mr R Halstead CBE
Mr J Clement Jones CBE

**Group appointed to discharge the functions of the
Commission in relation to the St Regis International Ltd/
Reed International Ltd investigation**

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1. On 27 January 1982 the Secretary of State for Trade received an application (which was amended by letter dated 15 February 1982) for his consent under section 58 of the Fair Trading Act 1973 to the transfer to Reed International Ltd (now Reed International plc)¹ of eight newspapers owned by Benham Newspapers Ltd. On 24 February 1982 the Secretary of State, in pursuance of section 59 of the Act, referred the proposed transfer to the Commission for investigation and report. The newspapers are listed in the reference, the text of which is reproduced at Appendix 1.

1.2. On 5 February 1982 the Secretary of State for Trade received an application (which was amended by letter dated 15 February 1982) for his consent under section 58 of the Fair Trading Act 1973 to the transfer to Reed International plc of eleven newspapers owned by St Regis International Ltd. On 24 February 1982 the Secretary of State, in pursuance of section 59 of the Act, referred the proposed transfer to the Commission for investigation and report. The newspapers are listed in the reference, the text of which is reproduced at Appendix 2.

1.3. We are required by section 60(1) of the Act to make our reports within three months of the date of the references. For the sake of convenience, we have combined our reports.

1.4. Notices inviting any person or organisation to submit evidence to the Commission on the proposed transfers were inserted in the *Financial Times*, the main newspapers comprised in the references and in certain provincial newspapers owned by Reed International plc.

1.5. We obtained written evidence from Benham Newspapers Ltd, St Regis International Ltd and Reed International plc and we held a hearing with each of them. We also visited the premises of QB Ltd where the newspapers owned by Benham Newspapers Ltd are printed.

1.6. In addition, we invited and obtained written evidence from other interested parties. These included organisations which represent newspaper proprietors and those which represent their employees, local authorities, chambers of commerce and owners of other newspapers which circulate in and near the circulation areas of the newspapers referred to us. Three members of the public also submitted written evidence.

1.7. Some of the evidence collected during the course of our investigation was of a confidential nature, and our report contains only such information as we consider necessary for a proper understanding of our conclusions.

1.8. We thank all those who helped us in our inquiry, particularly Benham Newspapers Ltd, St Regis International Ltd and Reed International plc.

¹ Its name was changed to Reed International plc in April 1982.