"Could Be the Start of Something Big"

That’s what the *Times Higher Education Supplement* (4 June) had to say about the first SHARP conference. “After several decades of growth, book history is now at a point of transition,” reported *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (14 July). “Researchers are beginning to cross disciplinary and national borders to establish new journals, book projects, centers, and academic programs. ...Related trends in a variety of disciplines have also converged to make book history a particularly hot topic in the humanities—and not just in the United States.” *The Chronicle* not only covered our conference: it surveyed the state of the art of book history, and ventured that book historians “could bridge the contentious divide in the humanities between theory and empiricism.” The history of the book, said Robert Darnton, might one day be as well-established as the history of art and the history of science.

So we are off to a reasonably good start. (Only remember: When you’re hot, be cool.)

The New York conference certainly exceeded our expectations. Many SHARP people contributed to making it a success, but none more than our local arrangements chairman, Mickie Grover. Though the 130 participants were, for the most part, total strangers to each other, they mixed splendidly. Panel sessions, coffee breaks, wine receptions, and the conference banquet were all scenes of lively discussion. Several attendees told us that the energetic exchange of ideas and addresses was evidence of the scholarly isolation of book historians: too many of our members can find no one who shares their interests on their home campuses. Well, SHARP intends to change all that.

Our next step is a call for papers for our second annual conference, scheduled for 14-16 July 1994 in Washington. Our host will be the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress. Once again, we welcome proposals dealing with any aspect of book history, broadly defined—the creation, diffusion, and reception of the written word in any historical period. We are, however, particularly interested in organizing panels on publishing records and archives, “little magazines” and other periodicals, electronic publishing, the book arts, and ongoing collaborative research projects. We also want to organize a session on pedagogy, which would not involve formal papers: this would be a workshop at which teachers of book history could exchange and discuss course syllabi. (We attempted such a workshop at our last conference, but had to abandon the idea when we received only one syllabus.) Conference proceedings will be in English, but papers may deal with any national literature.

Abstracts (two pages maximum) should be mailed to John Y. Cole, Director, The Center for the Book, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20540. The deadline is 10 December 1993. Any SHARP member who is not submitting a proposal can serve on the Program Committee, which will meet in Washington on 8 January 1994 to sort through the abstracts. If you want to join the Program Committee, or chair a panel at the conference, or set up a book exhibit, or help out with local arrangements, contact Dr. Cole at the above address or at 202-707-5221.

In July 1995 SHARP will meet at the University of Edinburgh in a joint conference with the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals. We are discussing a possible future conference in London, and we have received a very interesting invitation to meet in Prague. There are literally hundreds of book historians in Eastern Europe (the Russians in particular have done impressive work in the field) but we in the West know little about them. The aim of a Prague conference would be to establish links with these scholars on their home territory. Admittedly, it would be an ambitious enterprise, and we want to investigate the logistics thoroughly before committing ourselves; but we are approaching some Western European book history groups with a view to a possible trilingual conference in English, French, and
German. Contact us if you want to help in this project.

The possibility of founding a new journal devoted to book history was discussed at the New York conference, and a committee has been set up to conduct a feasibility study. Patrick Leary is the acting chairman of the committee, and if you have suggestions or experience to contribute, write to him at 321 N. Washington, Bloomington, IN 47408.

Of course, it will take years of planning to launch that journal—assuming it gets off the ground at all. In the meantime, we need to know which existing periodicals are hospitable to publishing and reviewing our work in book history. James West is compiling a list of such journals for publication in an upcoming issue of SHARP News. If you know of a periodical that should be included, send its name, address, editor, and areas of interest to Prof. James L. W. West III, Department of English, 117 Burrowes Building, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802-6200.

* Book History and Publishing Studies at Pacific Lutheran University

Book history at Pacific Lutheran University is taught as part of a larger curriculum in "publishing and printing arts." This is a six-course interdisciplinary minor offered by the English Department, designed to enhance traditional undergraduate liberal arts study as well as to serve students hoping to enter book- and publishing-related professions. Historical perspectives play an important role in two of the program's three required courses: "The Book in Society" and "The Art of the Book." The third required course, "Publishing Procedures," retains a primary emphasis on preprofessional skills and decision-making. Each is an upper-division fifteen-week semester course.

"The Art of the Book" is a studio course in typography and the visual and physical nature of text. Using the university's Elliott Press, a letterpress printing lab, students create facsimiles of significant milestones in printing history, usually title pages. They move on to design projects of their own, incorporating imagery and using computers and/or handset type. The course combines study of typographic principles and book design with a taste of fine printing and the "book arts," both traditional and innovative.

Of most interest to SHARP members, I suspect, is "The Book in Society." This course offers students a broad view of contemporary book culture, with constant reference to historical antecedents. As with the other courses in the program, most of the students are junior or senior liberal arts majors, although a growing portion are earning professional degrees in business, communications, or graphic design.

I try to supplement students' reading for this course with guest lectures by authors, booksellers, and librarians. I also rely on current news articles, particularly in trade journals such as Publishers Weekly, which are not reflected in the syllabus. Nonetheless, what follows is my present starting point for course readings, although I never seem to finish tinkering with this list. I welcome suggestions!

**Reading List**


1. The Democratization of Books and Printing.


3. BOOKS IN THE MARKETPLACE. Costs and prices; reviews; bookselling; bestsellers.


4. SMALL PRESSES, BIG NICHES. Literary, scholarly, feminist, gay/lesbian, multicultural, religious, "alternative" publishing.


5. BOOKS AND CHILDREN. Trade children's and young adult books; the politics of textbooks; canon controversies.


6. GENRE AND GENDER. Romance fiction; action/adventure novels; westerns; self-help books.


7. CONFLICT AND CENSORSHIP. Issues in censorship and free speech; school libraries; two case studies: The Satanic Verses and American Psycho.


8. IMMINENT HORIZONS. Electronic books; global publishing; literacy trends; ownership of and access to information and intellectual property.

"The Future of Reading," Utne Reader, July/August 1993, pp. 105-12.

—Megan Benton

How Well Does Book History Sell?

Both the SHARP conference and last April's meeting of the Book Trade History Group in London featured sessions on publishing in the book history field. Kevin Taylor, representing Cambridge University Press at the BTHG meeting, pointed out some of the rough economic limits on producing monographs in this area. A book priced at £35.00 retail, must sell 570 copies to recover production costs and overheads. Titles in the "Cambridge Studies in Publishing and Printing History" series have sold an average of around 700 copies, compared with 800 for a typical English literature monograph.

Sales of individual titles, however, can vary. John Feather, The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth Century England (1985) has sold 806 copies over seven years; Morton N. Cohen and Anita Gandolfo, eds., Lewis Carroll and the House of Macmillan (1987) has sold 579 copies; James E. Tierney, ed., The Correspondence of Robert Dodslow, 1733-1764 (1989) has sold 354 copies; Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, eds., Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475 (1989) has sold 803 copies; Elizabeth Arm-
strong, Before Copyright: The French Book-Privilege System 1498-1526 (1990) has sold 506 copies; Allen Reddick, The Making of Johnson's Dictionary, 1746-1773 (1990) has sold 1115 copies; Leslie Howsam, Cheap Bibles: Nineteenth-Century Publishing and the British and Foreign Bible Society was published fairly recently (1991) and has so far sold 350 copies.

It was pointed out at the SHARP conference that the development of courses in book history has been held back by the lack of paperback texts, but the economic constraints on paperback publishing are ever tighter. Nigel Cross, The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street (1988) sold 935 copies in hardcover, but paperback sales were only 413, and this kind of paperback must sell 2000 copies to break even. Given those hard realities, we applaud Cambridge University Press for recently bringing out in paperback David Vincent's Literary and Popular Culture: England 1750-1914.

**Research Fellowships in Book History**

To encourage research in its unparalleled library of American history and culture through 1876, the American Antiquarian Society will award a number of short- and long-term Visiting Research Fellowships for the year 1 June 1994 to 31 May 1995. AAS fellows may rent rooms in the Society's Goddard-Daniels House, near the AAS library in Worcester, MA. Several categories of awards will be offered:

**AAS-NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES FELLOWSHIPS (maximum $30,000)** will support six to twelve months of research on any subject in which the Society has strong holdings. They are not open to foreign nationals (except those who have been resident in the United States for at least three years) or to degree candidates.

**KATE B. AND HALL J. PETERSON FELLOWSHIPS (maximum $2550)** will support one to three months of research on any subject for which the Society has strong holdings. Dissertation writers and foreign nationals are eligible.

**AAS-AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES FELLOWSHIPS (maximum $1700)** will support one to two months' residence by persons working in any area of American eighteenth-century studies. Degree candidates are not eligible.

**STEPHEN BOTEIN FELLOWSHIPS (maximum $1700)** will support up to two months' residence by persons working in the history of the book in American culture. Research Associate status (without stipend) will also be available to qualified applicants. Through an arrangement with the Newberry Library, the AAS encourages applications for joint short-term fellowship tenure in both Chicago and Worcester.

For all AAS fellowships, the deadline for receipt of completed applications, including letters of recommendation, is 15 January 1994. Awards will be announced on or around 15 March 1994. At least two AAS-NEH fellowships will be awarded, together with thirteen to sixteen short-term awards. For a descriptive brochure and application forms, contact John B. Hench, Director of Research and Publication, Room A, American Antiquarian Society, 185 Salisbury Street, Worcester, MA 01609, telephone 508-752-5813/755-5221.

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, the Bibliographical Society has established fellowships to support bibliographical research. The awards can be used to undertake microfilming, travel expenses, and visits to libraries and archives. Application forms are available from Dr. E. S. Leedham-Green, Cambridge University Library, West Road, Cambridge CB3 9DR, England, el17@uk.ac.cam.phoenix. The deadline for receipt of all application materials, including two letters of reference, is 30 November 1993.

The History of Reading Special Interest Group encourages historical research on reading, reading instruction, and literacy. It was founded in 1975 as a constituent of the International Reading Association, and it meets at the annual convention of the IRA in late April. The group publishes a twice-yearly newsletter, History of Reading News, which features book reviews, conference announcements, and an ongoing list of textbook collections (readers, spellers, speakers, composition books, and grammars). Recent articles include a report by Luther B. Clegg on oral histories he collected from teachers who worked in one- and two-room schools in West Texas between 1900 and 1940. For a free copy of the newsletter, write to E. Jennifer Monaghan, 534 Third Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215. To subscribe, send a check for $7.50 made out to History of Reading SIG and mail it to Dr. A. Garr Cranney, Department of Secondary Education, Box 42, McKay Building, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

The Bibliographical Society of Canada/La Société Bibliographique du Canada announces a new electronic discussion group, BIBSOCAN, devoted to international as well as Canadian bibliography. To
subscribe, send a message to the listserv at utoronto-bitnet saying “sub bibsocan [your name]”. For further information contact the listserv moderator, Sandra Alston, at the University of Toronto: alstons@vm.utcc.utoronto.ca or alstons@utorvm.bitnet.

**Conferences**

The annual conference of the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand will be held 30 September to 1 October 1993 at the Barr Smith Library at the University of Adelaide. In conjunction with that meeting, the ALIA Rare Books and Special Collections Special Interest Group will also meet at the Barr Smith Library on 29 September. For information contact Liz Lee or Ray Choate, Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, SA 5005, Australia, telephone 08-303-5345/5370, fax 08-303-4369, rchoate@library.adelaide.edu.au.

The University of Minnesota will host a conference on “The Greek and Roman Book” at the Minneapolis campus 1-2 October 1993. Five sessions are planned: the format of the ancient book; the image of the book in art, literature, and religion; libraries and the book trade; orality, literacy, and the book; and a general discussion. For registration information, contact Professional Development and Conference Services, 214 Nolte Center, 315 Pillsbury Drive SE, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455, telephone 612-624-6053. For other information, contact Prof. Nita Krevans, Classical and Near Eastern Studies, 331 Folwell, 9 Pleasant Street SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, telephone 612-625-3422, nkrevans@staff.tc.umn.edu.

“The Humanist Printer: A Conference Honoring Daniel Berkeley Updike” will be the theme of the next annual conference of the American Printing History Association. It will meet 1-3 October 1993 in Providence, RI, with side trips to Wickford and Newport. For information contact Jennifer B. Lee, John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912. Telephone (401) 863-1511.

Robin Alston, director of the School of Library and Archive Studies at University College London, is planning to launch Britain’s first MA program in the History of the Book at the University of London. A workshop, tentatively scheduled for November, will meet to discuss core subjects of study and to define a curriculum. Anyone interested in participating should contact Dr. Warren Cherniak, Director of the Centre for English Studies, telephone 071-636-8000 ext. 3213.

“The End of Fleet Street?: The National Newspaper Industry in Historical Perspective” will be the topic of a one-day conference at London’s City University in February 1994. The conference will be open to journalists and lay people as well as academics. It will address such issues as the transformation of industrial relations, regional newspapers, and press freedom. For information contact Michael Bromley, Department of Journalism, The City University, Northampton Square, London EC1V 0HB, England.

**Public Lectures**

The New York Public Library continues to sponsor lectures that will interest SHARP members. On 16 November, Morris Dickstein will moderate “Who Cares Who Killed Edmund Wilson?: A Discussion on Criticism Today,” with David Denby, Mary Gordon, and Edward Rothstein contributing to the panel. Two other lectures will complement the exhibition “The Dead Sea Scrolls: Ancient Civilization/Modern Scholarship,” on view at the library from 7 October 1993 through 8 January 1994: Magen Broshi on “The Dead Sea Scrolls: What Have We Learnt?” (6 October), and Lawrence H. Schiffman on “Scholars, Scrolls, and Scandals: The Dead Sea Scrolls in the History of Judaism and Christianity” (7 December). All lectures begin at 6 p.m. in the Celeste Bartos Forum. Tickets are $6.00 and can be purchased by writing to The Public Education Forum, Room M-6, New York Public Library, Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street, New York, NY 10018-2788.

**Recent Publications**

**General**


Jane Tylus, Writing and Vulnerability in the Renaissance (Bloomington, IN: Lilly Library, 1993).


Britain


Douglas Bruster, Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993).

Linda David, Children's Books Published by William Darton and His Sons (Bloomington, IN: Lilly Library, 1992).

N. N. Feltes, Literary Capital and the Late Victorian Novel (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1993).


Canada


France


Greece

Rosalind Thomas, Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992).

Ireland


Italy


Russia

United States
Deborah Carlin, Cather, Canon, and the Politics of Reading (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1993).
Charles Scribner, Jr., In the Web of Ideas: The Education of a Publisher (New York: Scribners, 1993).

How We Are Doing

The SHARP New York conference concluded on 11 June with our annual business meeting. The four officers on the Executive Board who had until now been serving provisionally—Jonathan Rose (president), Simon Eliot (vice president), Mickie Grover (treasurer), and Patrick Leary (secretary)—were each elected to a two-year term. A Board of Directors was also elected: Martin Antonetti (The Grolier Club), Bill Bell (University of Edinburgh), John Y. Cole (Center for the Book, Library of Congress), Ann Cowan (Simon Fraser University), Robert Darnton (Princeton University), Stephen Green (British Library), Ezra Greenspan (University of South Carolina), David D. Hall (Harvard Divinity School), John Hench (American Antiquarian Society), Jeremiah Kaplan (Scholastic, Inc.), Wallace Kirsop (Monash University), Elisabeth Leedham-Green (Cambridge University Library), Mark Lehmstedt (Leipziger Arbeitskreis zur Geschichte des Buchwesens), Deanna B. Marcum (Library of Congress), David McKitterick (Trinity College Cambridge Library), Philip Metzger (Lehigh University Library), E. Jennifer Monaghan (Brooklyn College, CUNY), Donald Oresman (Paramount Communications, Inc.), Robert Patten (Rice University), James Raven (Magdalene College Cambridge), Tim Rix (Centre for the Book, British Library), John Sutherland (University College London), G. Thomas Tanselle (Guggenheim Foundation),

Begin or renew your SHARP membership, and you will receive SHARP News and the SHARP Membership Directory. Send your check to Jonathan Rose, History Department, Drew University, Madison, NJ 07940, USA; or (when paying in sterling) to Dr. Simon Eliot, The Open University, 4 Portwall Lane, Bristol BS1 6ND, UK.

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Check if you prefer not to be included in the SHARP Directory and SHARP mailing lists:  

The meeting approved a proposal to make the SHARP mailing list available for sale to publishers and organizations with an interest in book history. (SHARP members who have asked not to be included in the Membership Directory will also be omitted from the mailing list.) A motion to increase membership dues was passed: see the membership renewal form for the new rates. (In response to a question some of you have asked, your membership year begins whenever you join SHARP, and you are credited with another full year whenever you renew.) The treasurer’s report, presented by Mickie Grover, was approved:

**Income:**
- Membership dues: $2993.00
- Contributions: 725.00
- Total: $3655.00

**Expenses:**
- Publications/postage: $1444.00
- Legal expenses: 378.00
- Total: $1822.00

**Cash on hand:** $1833.00

The SHARP constitution was also discussed at the business meeting, and ultimately it was sent back to the Executive Board for revision. Some of the suggested changes simply involved clarification of language, but more substantial amendments were proposed as well. The sense of the meeting was that the Executive Board should be expanded from four to seven or eight members, and that the directors should be subject to term limits. We are specifically considering the addition of a membership secretary, a publicity director, and a publications coordinator to Executive Board. Given the growth of SHARP (we now have more than 400 members) it makes sense to divide the administrative labors among a larger body of officers. Later this year copies of the revised constitution will be mailed to all SHARP members for ratification by postal ballot.

So far, a guerrilla style of management has worked quite well for SHARP. Though the new constitution will inevitably formalize our governing structure, it remains open and flexible for anyone who has ideas and energy. For example, in our last newsletter we suggested that enterprising members might want to organize regional subgroups within SHARP, and two of our newly-elected directors have responded.

First, E. Jennifer Monaghan has offered to set up a chapter for the New York metropolitan area. We might start by meeting at intervals to read and discuss papers, and take it from there. Interested people should contact Prof. Monaghan at 534 Third Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215, telephone 718-951-5994/499-0409. Also, Wallace Kirsop reports that some Australian members would like to set up a focus group. Prof. Kirsop can be reached at the Department of Romance Languages, Monash University, Clayton, Vic. 3168, telephone 541-0811.

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