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Quebec Colloquium Set for 2000

A major international colloquium on publishing history is to take place in Quebec in May 2000. 'From Old Europe to New Worlds: The changes in publishing from the 18th century to the year 2000', is to be jointly hosted by the Université de Sherbrooke and the Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines. According to the main organisers, Jacques Michon and Jean-Yves Mollier, the aim is to bring together those involved in national history of the book and publishing projects to take stock of progress achieved, and to consider ways forward for these and other emerging book history projects. Thus the colloquium will serve as a platform from which to evaluate methodologies, investigate areas of potential international collaborative research and survey progress in the field. Five major themes have been agreed upon under the general conference title, including examining the export of national publishing models and the growth of large publishing houses, analysing the development of homegrown publishing systems, and discussing the circulation of ideas and innovations through print media.

The organisers are currently soliciting general comments and session ideas, and in particular suggestions relating to publishing and book history in areas such as India, Asia and Africa. For further information, contact Jacques Michon, GRELQ, Université de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, Quebec, J1K 2R1, Email: j.michon@login.net or Jean-Yves Mollier, Centre d’histoire culturelle des sociétés contemporaines, Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, 47 Bd. Vauban, 78047 Guyancourt, Cedex.

Second Edinburgh Centre Launched

After two years of planning and negotiation, the University of Edinburgh announced in February 1998 the establishment of a Centre for the History of the Book. The CHB, based in the Faculty of Arts, exists as an interdisciplinary and international research centre for advanced scholarly research into the history of the production, circulation, and reception of texts.

The CHB provides a research base for a number of projects, including A History of the Book in Scotland, to be published in 4 volumes by Edinburgh University Press, with editorial collaboration from Cardiff, Napier, and Oxford Universities.

Book History is researched and taught at the University of Edinburgh within several departments. In recent years, the University has also hosted a number of Book History events, including the SHARP conference in 1995, as well as the annual conference of the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals (RSVP). In 1996 a conference entitled ‘Across Boundaries: the Culture and Commerce of the Book’ was jointly organised by the Departments of English Literature and French with sponsorship from the Saintsbury Vineyard of California, the papers of which will be published in early 1999.

In recognition of 150 years as bookseller to the University, James Thin announced this year its sponsorship of an ongoing series of CHB lectures. The forthcoming James Thin lecture will be delivered by Robert Darnton on 26 May in Old College (5.15 pm). The title of Professor Darnton’s lecture will be 'Forbidden Books and the Media of Prerevolutionary France'.

Short- and long-term visiting fellowships are available to scholars undertaking advanced research into any aspect of Book History or the sociology and material culture of the text. For further details please write to the Secretary, CHB, 22A Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh, EH8 9LN, UK, or Email CHB@ed.ac.uk. The CHB web page can be found at: http://www.ed.ac.uk/englit/research/chb

Books Go Dutch

In January of 1997 Leiden University Library hosted the inaugural meeting of the Werkgroep Boekwetenschap, or Leiden Centre for the Book. The Centre brings together research and teaching interests ranging across the entire period of recorded communication, from inscription to digital information networks, and right across the Faculty of Arts and the university library. This varied background promises an enormous potential for interdisciplinary collaboration, and the participation of the university library in the Centre has paved the way for a more intensive use of the library’s rare books and manuscripts, such as the rich Indonesian and Near-Eastern collections and Dutch publishers’ archives.

Despite the severe budget restraints Dutch universities have been experiencing in recent years, the Leiden Centre for the Book has attracted support from the university’s Board of Governors for new programmes of teaching and research. A new teaching programme is now in the process of being drafted. The new programme should offer all Arts students a choice of specialisation paths (such as paleography, text edition and recension; book and publishing history; electronic text and image processing) cutting across a wide range of existing disciplines. It is expected that from the academic year 1998–99 Boekwetenschap (book studies) will be available as an optional specialisation for any student taking a degree in an existing arts discipline. If the specialisation programme proves successful, a full book studies MA (equivalent) programme may be created over the next number of years.

The Leiden programme is unique in the Netherlands for its marriage of Eastern and Western book history and the intensive collaboration between the university library and the Faculty of Arts. But in addition to the pursuit of the many traditional branches
of scholarly book studies it also offers courses in various aspects of the electronic revolution, such as SGML markup and electronic prepress, as well as some practical instruction in letterpress printing and book publishing. The publishing activities are coordinated by Academic Press Leiden, a publishing venture run jointly by students and staff, publishing works of book historical interest (eg Stanley Morison’s First Principles of Typography with an introduction by Huib van Krimpen and a preface by David McKitterick, and The Vocal Forest: A Study of the Context of Three Low Countries Printers’ Devices of the Seventeenth-Century) and works of Anglo-Dutch interest such as travel accounts (Anne Radcliffe’s A Journey Through Holland Made in the Summer of 1794 is scheduled to appear in May).

Research interests of participating staff include Dutch book history from medieval times to the present; Anglo-Dutch book relations; Oriental book history; electronic publication, etc. The Centre has recently awarded PhD scholarships for research of two Leiden university collections, the unique library of the seventeenth-century Leiden jurist and book collector Johannes Thysius, and the archives of Haarlem publisher De Erven Bohn (one of very few surviving Dutch publisher’s archives going back to the late eighteenth century). Pursuing its interest in electronic publication, the centre participates in another recent initiative, the Electronic Text Centre Leiden (ETCL), founded in October 1997 with the aim of supporting and stimulating the use of electronic forms of text in teaching, research and scholarly publication. The ETCL, jointly funded by the university library and the Faculty of Arts, is about to embark on a digitisation and archiving programme, which will initially focus in particular on the Dutch Golden Age. It aims to make available a corpus of literary works of the period, mainly in Dutch and Latin.

Other activities of the Centre include the organisation of incidental conferences, such as the round table meeting on the Dutch equivalent of the Net Book agreement held in October last, with economists, representatives of the Dutch booktrade, and a guest appearance by distinguished British publisher John Calder, solitary apologist for the demise of the NBA. In 1999 a conference is planned on nineteenth-century Leiden book culture, the era of renewed international expansion of the Dutch booktrade, which saw such Leiden publishers as E.J. Brill, A.W. Sijthoff and Martinus Nijhoff rise to prosperity.

It remains to be seen, of course, whether it will be possible for such a heterogeneous collection of people and interests as the Centre has brought together to forge a lasting bond. But a D fl 1.1 million allocation from university central funds over the next three-and-a-half years will certainly help to stimulate efforts to formulate and consolidate teaching and research programmes.

Adrian van der Weel, Project Coordinator, Leiden Centre for the Book

Booktrade in Austria as a Field for International Studies

The history of the book in the Austrian Habsburg Monarchy has never been written. This is especially true for the time from Maria Theresa to the Revolution 1848/49 where many periods and regions are still a terra incognita. This is in sharp contrast to the results of book research in other European countries, such as England, France or Germany. It has therefore been hardly recognised that Austria, with its many ethnic groups, nationalities, religions, and no less that 14 languages within its borders, would be an ideal field for comparative research. Thus, within one state we find the internationalism claimed by Robert Darnton as needed in the study of the history of the book.

There are many reasons why the study of that area lags behind the research done in Germany and elsewhere. There is the language barrier. Furthermore, research has developed differently in various Austrian regions, with many sources now dispersed in the libraries and archives of many nations.

When in 1967 the Stanford University Libraries bought a large Austrian-Collection with many early and rare books, brochures, newspapers, magazines and leaflets, I tried to identify their printers and publishers. Soon I realised that most of them were virtually unknown, not found in any book histories, handbook, or other sources. Since then I have been collecting names, dates and facts. Research revealed that the production of original works was neither as meagre as had been believed, nor was it without important works. This material is now the basis for a planned topography.

Although the booktrade within the Habsburg Empire was interconnected in various ways and connected to other European centres (eg Leipzig), most of the studies published so far have focused only on specific regions, either the Austro-German, the Czech or the Hungarian sectors. A survey of the whole is still lacking (one exception, at least as a beginning, is the articles in the 1910 issues of the Österreichisch-ungarische Buchhändler-Correspondenz).

German research has concentrated mainly on the booktrade of the Austro-German region, now part of modern-day Austria. It overlooked that the situation in the Habsburg monarchy with its many nationalities was quite different from that of Germany, because the Austro-German population at that time represented only about one third of the whole population. Whereas the printing, publishing and trade with books during the early period was mostly done by German and Austro-Germans, there were nevertheless Czech, Hungarian, Hebraic, Italian, Polish and other printers and publishers at work. Austro-Germans published not only German books, but also others in the languages of the monarchy. One should
note that the first Serbian newspaper was published in Vienna, the first Hungarian periodical in Latin in Bratislava (Poszony), and the first Romanian political newspaper in Kronstadt (Brasso). The Austrian monarchy therefore had, before the dawn of Nationalism in the second half of the 19th century, a multi-national, multi-cultural atmosphere; it was a melting-pot.

Since a survey of the booktrade in the Habsburg monarchy is lacking, the plan emerged to create a Topography of all printers, publishers, dealers, lending-libraries and so forth for the period from 1750 to 1850. It follows the pattern of the works by Benzing, Paisley and H.W. Laing, modifying their content and arrangement. The Topography will be arranged according to the place names of cities in the German version, listing the first printings, followed by the names of printers, publishers and dealers, their activities, dates etc, their forerunners and successors, agents, bibliographic references and indices. At present the list of the cities from Agram (Zagreb) to Mistek, A–M, is in preparation with the aim of establishing a bibliography of all relevant works for that area and period. The Topography will show the many national and international connections, laying the foundation for later intensive research.

Compared with the research project of Frédéric Barbier and others for France, undertaken within the framework and with the support of the Institut de l'Histoire moderne et contemporaine at l'École pratique des Hautes Études, the Topography is a modest enterprise. It has to be accomplished with the help of only a few assistants. Only recently, it has been sponsored by the Horst Kliemann-Stiftung of the Börsenverein (for material) and by the Jubiläumsfond of the Austrian National Bank (for assistants). The Topography will be published in the new series Buchforschung, edited by Peter R. Frank and Murray G. Hall, by Böhlau Verlag, Wien. This series is devoted to works on the history of the book in Austria, from the Baroque era up to the present. The Topography will show the many national and international connections, laying the foundation for later intensive research.

This past summer (1997) the University of Virginia witnessed the annual influx of book enthusiasts who come to attend the Rare Book School, sponsored by the Book Arts Press. I was among those attending for the first time, and for me it was an extraordinary experience. I came to participate in a new course, one that I'm sure will be of particular interest to the readers of SHARP News. This was a course on 'Teaching the History of the Book'. But before I launch into an account of that course and its outcome, I'm sure a number of readers would like to know more about the Book Arts Press and its activities at the University of Virginia.

The Book Arts Press (known as the BAP to its many friends) was founded by Terry Belanger in 1972 at Columbia University. Its mission, then as now, is to support teaching the history of the book in its many permutations. When Terry moved to Virginia in 1992, where he is University Professor and Honorary Curator of Special Collections, the BAP came along too. The BAP consists of a suite of rooms on the first floor of the university library, which is a most suitable location. Contained within those rooms are a first-rate library of about 15,000 books and 5,000 prints, dating from the 15th century to the present, a collection of printing presses and equipment (including a replica wooden common press), and classroom and studio facilities. Here University of Virginia students work closely with Terry during the academic year, and here also is the focal point for the summer Rare Book School. See the BAP home page for its full range of activities: http://poe.acc.virginia.edu/~oldbooks/

Rare Book School (RBS) also dates back to Terry's years at Columbia (it was founded in 1983) and today RBS boasts a very distinguished group of alumnae and alumni. Each year about 300 students gather to take one or more of the 24 classes offered over four weeks in the summer (there are now also winter offerings). This year, the subjects included such topics as 'The American Book in the Industrial Era: 1820-1940', 'Introduction to Descriptive Bibliography' (one of the RBS mainstays), 'Book Illustration to 1890', 'History of the Printed Book in the West' (also a mainstay), and an 'Introduction to Electronic Texts and Images'. Clearly there is much here to attract anyone interested in book history. But there is more. There are lectures and other bookish events organised for the evenings. The week of my stay we had lectures by G. Thomas Tanselle, 'The Bibliographical Analysis of Book Design', Peter Stallybrass (Penn), 'How Many Hands Does It Take to Read or Write a Book?' and Terry Belanger, 'Twenty-Five Come Sunday: The Book Arts Press, 1972–'. Each week there were two different invited lecturers in addition to Terry, and an evening visit to the Charlottesville bookshops. Perhaps the most stimulating aspect of RBS is simply the concentration of talent and interest in that most remarkable place, the BAP. Attending RBS for someone bibliographically inclined, like myself, is probably as close as I'll ever get to a religious experience. I highly recommend it.

'Teaching the History of the Book' was developed and taught by Michael Ryan and Daniel Traister, both of the Department of Special Collections at the University of Pennsylvania. I can do no better than quote their description of the course: 'This course will investigate different ways of thinking about, designing, and conducting a course on the history of the book. It is a course, not on the history of books and printing, but on the teaching of that subject. Our first purpose will be the assessment of some of the strengths and weaknesses of differing approaches to the subject. Our second purpose will be the investigation of resources available to teachers and students in this field. The Book Arts Press's extensive collection of resources for teaching the history of the book will play an integral role in this course. Our intention is to consider the options and resources open to instructors whether full- or part-time academics or librarians, or others who are either currently engaged in teaching such a course, or who will begin doing so in the coming academic year.'

Of the nine of us who took the course, four were librarians who worked with rare books, manuscripts, or archives; one was a book collector; one was a library administrator; one was a printer;
one was a graduate student; and one was a history professor. Most
of us had already taught the history of the book, or some aspect of
it, or were preparing to do so. Our instructors both had had exten-
sive experience in teaching book history and recently team-taught
such courses as this RBS course was also team-taught. Such ar-
rangements can be awkward and difficult, but in this case Ryan
and Traister worked well together and with the class to create a
teaching and learning situation that was as intellectually stimulat-
ing as anything I have ever participated in. That we were able to
spend five days, all day long, sitting around a seminar table talk-
ing about teaching book history (and much more), without grow-
ing bored, was a tribute to our instructors. The two had an extraor-
dinary ability to bounce topics and ideas back and forth, each with
his own valuable perspective. Both of our instructors are well
versed in the history of the book, but Michael Ryan comes to it
from a background in European intellectual history, and Dan
Traister comes to it from a background in sixteenth-century non-
dramatic literature. One participant (I hesitate to use the word stu-
dent here because we were all teachers — some for many years —
who were discussing matters of great personal and professional
concern) characterized our instructors as 'a delightful combina-
tion of Boswell & Johnson and Laurel & Hardy'. And though
they were certainly entertaining, they were always intellectually
stimulating.

Most RBS courses are full of facts, techniques, processes, and
hands-on learning, but our course was all discussion. Ryan and
Traister had prepared a detailed day-by-day syllabus that we man-
ged to follow for a day or two: though we covered all the topics
by the end of Friday, it was not in the order envisaged by their
syllabus. We began by considering the field of the history of the
book, and even the question of what we mean by 'book'. This led
us into historiographical considerations of how the field has de-
veloped and what its roots are. But this supposes there is a con-
cise field, and as we discovered (and many of us already knew)
the field is far from being well defined. Indeed what should this
field of study be called? It has been called many things, but over
the last few decades 'history of the book' has found much favour,
particularly among those who have been trained in the Anglo-
American bibliographic tradition (my own background) which has
emphasised the physical book itself. Recently, however, the field
has undergone an exciting, if somewhat chaotic, influx of new
ideas, concepts, and perceptions by scholars who, in general, have
not been trained in the analysis of the physical book. These new
students draw on, but are by no means limited to, intellectual in-
fluences derived from the French Annales school; the sociocul-
tural approach of bibliographical scholars such as D. F. McKenzie
(both of which are usually considered within the newer 'history
of the book'); literary approaches such as reader reception theory;
and traditional historical emphases on archival research, from all
of which (as well as from cultural studies) the new book history
has emerged. No longer focused solely on the physical book or its
production, 'book history' emphasizes how books function in so-
ciety and shape culture, and much, much more. Indeed the field
seems wide open, a development which I believe to be all to the
good.

In our discussions on teaching it soon became apparent that
the one thing we all agreed on is that we lack a textbook for the
field. I have been teaching the history of the book for more than a
decade and have tried several different texts or combinations of
texts and found none that was really suitable. Some of us have
used texts as widely varying as Eisenstein’s one-volume The Print-
ing Revolution in Early Modern Europe, the English translation
of Febvre and Martin’s Coming of the Book, Gaskell’s New Intro-
duction to Bibliography, Greetham’s Textual Scholarship (I’ve
used all of these), McMurtrie’s The Book, Williams and Abbott’s
Introduction to Bibliographical and Textual Studies, or some com-
bination of readings from various journals and books. While each
of these texts has its good points, none is able to serve as a text
for the whole field, whether we call it 'history of the book' or 'book
history'. We began to digress from the syllabus and discuss (with
our instructors’ enthusiastic support) just what such a textbook
ought to contain. This, of course, is dependent on all kinds of
other decisions, and brings us back to the question of what the
field encompasses. That is still an open question, of course, but
the very act of creating a text would go a long way to define the
field. We decided to attempt an outline for a textbook. Jonathan
Rose went so far as to present an outline he had worked up during
the few hours we weren’t meeting. The outline was comprehen-
sive and assumed that the work of creating the book would be
shared. We spent many hours considering Jonathan’s outline, al-
ternatives, possible formats beyond the codex, but in the end came
back to the original concept of a comprehensive text. We agreed
that such a text is greatly needed, but we did not want to see the
momentum we had developed just disappear after we all went
back to our lives beyond RBS.

Four of us from the class - Michael Ryan, Dan Traister, Jonathan
Rose, and I - came together as an executive editorial board to
explore and plan for a textbook in book history; we invited Mar-
tin Antonetti (Curator of Rare Books, Smith College), who has
been teaching the History of the Printed Book in the West at RBS
for many years, to join us. We will be presenting our outline and
ideas at the SHARP conference in Vancouver in the hope that we
will generate consideration, criticism, and suggestions by people
who might actually use such a text in the classroom. We have
established a web site for the project (http://www.ukans.edu/
~bookhist/textbook.html) where we are posting information, in-
cluding our tentative outline. Our project is a collaborative one
which will involve the contributions of many people. We invite
you to attend the Vancouver session, to offer your suggestions,
and to volunteer as a contributor. If you are unable to attend the
meeting, please look at our web site and likewise offer your sug-
gestions and volunteer as a contributor.

Richard W. Clement, University of Kansas

Call for Contributions

Eighteenth-Century Novel will be an annual refereed publica-
tion dedicated to critical examination of the prose fiction of
the 'long' eighteenth century, roughly 1688–1830. At present we are
especially interested in articles dealing with works written after
1730. Requests for further information or manuscripts of 750–
1,500 words (notes) or 7,000–14,000 words (articles), prepared

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in compliance with the rules and procedures outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style* (14th ed.) should be submitted to Professor Susan Spencer, Editor *Eighteenth-Century Novel*, 16 East Constance Avenue, Santa Barbara, CA 93105. Email inquiries should be sent to ssperencer@ax1.ucok.edu

**The Reading Experience Database (RED)** is launching a quarterly newsletter *RED Letter* for contributors to, and those interested in, the database and related topics in the history of reading. If you wish to receive an electronic version of issue one please contact S.M.Colclough@open.ac.uk. This issue contains a list of designated readers of texts which contain many reading experiences, and news about the Open University Book History research project ‘Was there a reading revolution? Evidence for change in the British reading experience, 1700-1740-1800-1840’. If you would like a hard copy of *RED Letter*, complete with the RED introduction pack, please write to Dr Colclough, The Open University, Parsifal College, 527 Finchley Road, London NW3 7BG, UK.

In 1999 ESC (English Studies in Canada), an official publication of the Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of English (ACCUTE), will be celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary as a quarterly journal of criticism and scholarship concerned with all literature written in the English language. To help mark this event, the editorial team at ESC is planning a special issue on the history of the book in the English language. Submissions are invited, therefore, from members of ACCUTE, and others associated with the Canadian academic and literary community, on the authorship, production, publication, reception, and readership of books in the English language as well as on the significance of books and other forms of print culture. These submissions, clearly written in a language that communicates with both specialists and non-specialists in the history of the book, should conform to the latest edition of either the MLA Handbook or The MLA Style Manual. They should be submitted in duplicate, with a stamped, self-addressed envelope, and two cover sheets listing the author’s name and address and the title of the article. These articles should arrive at the ESC editorial office at Carleton University **by 31 December 1998**, so that they may be evaluated by two assessors, one of them a member of the ESC Editorial Advisory Board. Those selected will be published in the December 1999 issue of the journal. For further information please contact: ESC, Department of English, Dunton Tower, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6.

**Call for Papers**

The **History of the Book in Australia** (HOBa) 1998 conference will be held at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, from Saturday 19 to Sunday 20 September 1998. HOBa '98 is being organised in association with the Library Society of the State Library of NSW and the Australian Scholarly Editions Centre, University College ADFA.

The HOBa '98 conference will be devoted to papers: (a) on topics relating to publishing, readership and reception in languages other than English (including the Celtic languages) and, (b) on other topics falling within any of the three periods of the HOBa project. Proposals for 20 minute papers are now called for. Abstracts (no more than 300 words) should be sent by **18 May 1998** to: Elizabeth Webby, Department of English, University of Sydney NSW 2006 Australia (Tel: +61 2 9351 6835; Fax: +61 2 9351 2434; Email: elizabeth.webby@english.usyd.edu.au). The program committee will advise on selection by 1 June 1998 and further information about HOBa '98 will be circulated shortly afterwards.

**Conference**

The **Library History Round Table** is holding a conference on 11 and 12 June 1998 on ‘Books, Libraries and Reading Throughout the Cold War’ in the Sèvres Centre, 35 bis rue de Sèvres, Paris. The programme includes the following sessions:

- **Thursday 11 June, 9.00–13.00 Libraries in the Cold War**, chaired by François Dupuigrenet Desrouailles; 14.30–17.30 *Publishing During the Cold War*, chaired by Pamela Spence Richards.
- **Friday 12 June, 9.30–13.00 Reading During the Cold War**, chaired by John Y. Cole; 14.30–18.00 *Libraries During the Cold War*, chaired by Martine Poulin.

On both days there will be a screening of Nizan’s *Arthur Koestler, from Komissar to Yogi* at 13.30. There is no charge for admission. Further particulars from Marie-Noëlle Frachon, ensib, 17–21 bd du 11 novembre 1918, 69623 Villeurbanne, France. Tel: 04 72 44 43 22 Fax: 04 72 44 27 88; Email: frachon@ensib.fr

**Course Announcement**

The **History of the Book MA** in the School of Advanced Study, University of London, was established in 1995 by Professor Robin Alston OBE, who retires as Course Director this summer. His post will be filled by Dr Simon Eliot of the Open University, co-founder and current President of SHARP, and co-director of the Reading Experience Database.

This Master’s degree is the only such programme in the English-speaking world. The opportunity to study the History of the book in world-renowned institutions with experts not only from the University of London but also from the British Library, the British Museum, and the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum has attracted students from Australia, Canada, Ireland, Finland, Germany, New Zealand, Spain and the United States.

Options already under way are ‘Authors, Publishers and Textual Theory (1850-present day)’ (Warwick Gould, Keith Sambrook); ‘The Serial and the Book’ (Michael Harris, Laurel Brake); ‘The Mediaeval Book’ (Pamela Robinson, invited experts); ‘The Electronic Book’ (Robin Alston); ‘Text and Image: Illustrated Books and Art Publishing since 1830’ (Valerie Holman, Paul Goldman, Rowan Watson); ‘Western Book Structures: issues in Materials, Conservation and Preservation’ (Roy Moxham, Robin Alston, invited experts). All students attend a Core Course, and write a Dissertation.

Next year the programme will build on its success and offer a new option in ‘The Italian Book 1465-1800’ utilising the unrivalled resources for the study of Italian books in the British Library. The course will be co-ordinated by Dr Jane Everson (Royal Holloway, University of London) and Dr Denis Reidy (British
Library).

Full details, including prospectuses and application forms, can be obtained from Pamela Robinson, Course Tutor, MA in the History of the Book, Centre for English Studies, School of Advanced Study, Room 307, Senate House, Malet St., London WC1E 7HU; phone and fax (from 15 April): 0044-171 862 8764; 0044 171 862 8672 Email p.robinson@sas.ac.uk

Scholarly Liaisons

The 1998 meeting of the American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies, held at the University of Notre Dame, 1–5 April, marked SHARP’s third year as an affiliate of this organization. This year’s ASECS/SHARP session, ‘The Periodical Press and the Diffusion of Culture’, met in the Rare Book Room of University of Notre Dame’s Hesburgh Library. Paul Benahamou, Purdue University, chaired the session which featured four papers representing a rich variety of work on print history from the perspectives of several European cultures. Harold Stone (American University in Cairo) gave a paper entitled ‘Bacchini’s Giornale de Letterati’; Jin Lu (Purdue University, Calumet) spoke on ‘England in Prevost’s Pour et Contre- An Example of Cultural Diffusion’; Karin A. Wurst (Michigan State University) presented ‘The Periodical Journal des Lucus und der Moden and the Differentiation of Eighteenth-Century German Culture’; and Edward Jacobs (Old Dominion University) talked about ‘Managing Modernity’s Bloody Fluxes: Eighteenth-Century British Newspapers and the Conquest of Mutability’. These presentations, in turn, generated good follow-up discussions.

In addition, the organisers of the 1998 ASECS conference graciously arranged a reception at the conference for members of SHARP. Christopher Fox, co-chair of the 1998 ASECS meeting, secured sponsorship for the SHARP get-together from the University of Notre Dame’s The Friends of the Library, and Laura Fuderer made the actual arrangements. The reception took place in the Hesburgh Library’s Rare Book Room, and a representative from the Library spoke briefly on Notre Dame’s 18th-century holdings. The 1998 list of Recent and Current Research Projects on Authorship, Reading, and Publishing by Members of ASECS and SHARP was distributed at the reception; copies will also be available at the 1998 SHARP conference in Vancouver this July. Within the next month or so, an electronic version of the 1998 handbook will be prepared for mounting on the SHARP website.

Sharpists may be interested to learn of a new journal in book studies, past present and future. Called ‘Y Llyfr yng Nghymru’/‘Welsh Book Studies’, it is produced bilingually in Welsh and English by the recently formed Aberystwyth Centre for the Book in Aberystwyth, Wales. The Aberystwyth Centre for the Book is a cooperative venture by the Welsh Books Council, the National Library of Wales and the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, to foster interest in the book.

For further information about this new journal contact the Marketing Department, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, Wales SY23 3BU. For information on the Aberystwyth Centre for the Book, contact Dr Chris Baggs, Department of Information and Library Studies, University of Wales, Llanbadarn Fawr, Aberystwyth, Wales SY23 3AS. Email: cmb@aber.ac.uk

Web Watch

The new World Wide Web pages for Early Printed Collections in the British Library have been mounted on Portico, the British Library’s Online Information Server, and are available at: http://www.bl.uk/collections/epc/ In addition to information on the new Rare Books and Music Reading Room at St. Pancras, they also provide a guide to their printed material collections and catalogues. For further information, please contact: Dr. Christopher Skelton-Foord, Digital Library Coordinator Early Printed Collections, Lower Ground Floor, The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB Email: christopher.skelton-foord@bl.uk

Book Reviews


This collection by David D. Hall spans two decades, from a piece on print culture and collective mentality in seventeenth-century New England that dates from the late 1970s to an essay on varieties of communication (oral, written, and printed) in the seventeenth-century Chesapeake that will appear in the forthcoming History of the Book in America. Along the way one encounters all the little gems that have made Hall one of the foremost figures in the study of early American book history, including ‘On Native Ground’ (1983), ‘The Uses of Literacy in New England’ (1983), ‘The Politics of Writing and Reading in Eighteenth-Century America’ (1994), and ‘Readers and Reading in America’ (1994).

Think of David Hall as a bridge builder. At a time when many scholars were still writing about early American print culture as if it had no connection with the rest of the world, Hall established a fruitful rapprochement with French book historians that is evident throughout this volume. Emphasising continuity rather than change, he sets out to show, Chartier-like, that alleged differences between the culture of the common people and that of elites such as the Puritan clergy were not nearly so great as some scholars have thought. The same applies to the perceived divide between center and periphery: ‘Always, colonial culture was both local and metropolitan’, he writes (p. 6). Similarly, Hall stresses the ‘continuum between print and oral modes’ (84), and his essay on the Chesapeake skillfully shows the continuities between scribal and print modes. Hall acknowledges no turning points in time, at least until well into the nineteenth century; in his view, the entire colonial period in American history, and well beyond, constitutes one seamless cultural web. The glue that holds together all this gap-busting is Hall’s conviction that early American culture, as reflected in its ‘cultural practices’ in regard to print, was essentially and consistently Protestant and practical. Almanacs, sermons, and devotional works comprise the ‘steady sellers’ that lie at the heart of what Hall calls ‘traditional literacy’ (57). Traditional literacy in this sense is the key to his primary goal as a book historian:
the formulation of 'a more adequate history of culture in America' (13).

Hall’s graceful style is perfect for an essay format. Almost every chapter reads like a plenary lecture of sorts, as several of them originally were. But for all the charm and elegance of these essays, one wonders what sort of audience this book will find today. When book history as cultural history was struggling to establish itself against an elitist brand of high intellectual history on the one hand and older traditions of printing history and bibliography on the other, several of these essays did yeoman service. That critical battle has now been won, however, and SHARP, along with the American Antiquarian Society and several other far-sighted institutions that sponsored conferences at which some of these essays were first presented, embodies the cosmopolitan, international spirit of book history and print culture that Hall did so much to initiate. At the same time, reading these essays in a cluster in the late 1990s left me with an uneasy feeling of lightness and insubstantiality, as if Hall had formulated a vision and sketched out some hypotheses without providing the detailed evidence necessary to support them. But perhaps that is another way of saying that the essays in this book have helped to define a discipline which it is up to all of us to build.

Richard B. Sher, NJIT and Rutgers University


There is not a great deal of writing in British library history and what there is tends to be in essay form and is prone to be descriptive, rather than analytical. Big books with ideas tend to be in short supply. Even Thomas Kelly’s classic A History of the Public Library in Britain is stronger on description than interpretation. Alistair Black’s repackaged PhD thesis, one of the best in the subject area produced in the UK in recent years, takes us a long way in the ideas direction. Library historians, especially those with insufficient time for background reading, will benefit greatly from the discussions about the ideas which informed thinking about public library provision in the 19th century. There are chapters on the background to the public library ideal, utilitarianism, library pioneers, cultural and economic influences, idealism and the thinking of T. H. Green, social control, the character and influence of librarians and the social characteristics of library architecture.

Some of the text is inevitably controversial. While the influence of utilitarianism and its more intellectually attractive bedfellow, philosophic radicalism, is obvious to Black, he cannot show a direct link. Some discussion about the influence of radical Liberalism with its commitment to the widening of educational opportunity might have helped the argument. Although Sir John Lubbock gets a mention, a longer discussion of his work would have been useful. He was, after all, the William Ewart of the late 19th century. This is a difficult area for there was obviously something behind the rhetoric of the time even if it is difficult to put one’s finger on what it was.

The book is a good starting point for those wishing to follow up on this. The role of the public library is extended with discussions about its contribution to technical education and the emergence of business libraries during the First World War, which the author explicitly links with changing industrial needs. A re-evaluation of the role of the librarian shows them as less custodial and more proactive than previously thought. His discussion on social control is essential reading for those with an interest in who pulled the strings, although the conclusion that there was no overarching strategy of social control will not come as a great surprise.

The emergence of the public library is associated with the development of a building type and Black includes a well documented discussion of this. Social, rather than physical, factors are emphasised. Certainly the public library building of the period was remarkable in its need to give outer expression of its inner function but behind much of its rationale lay the simple fact that new industrial towns were markedly lacking in civic architecture and library buildings helped to alleviate this dearth. The fact that there was a strong chance that somebody else might pay for them was an additional inducement.

The copious footnotes show clear evidence of much hard work but unfortunately there is no bibliography and this makes tracing sources awkward, especially as the notes pages have no running headers (and this in a title with a list price of £50 sterling). At certain points in the text the author undertakes a Foucauldian analysis of the ideas discussed. I am not competent to comment on such matters except to state that every Scotsman knows that those who are few are seldom cauld.

John C. Crawford, Glasgow Caledonian University


These two volumes utilize the talents of several respected scholars of the book. Antiquaries, Book Collectors and the Circles of Learning, edited by Robin Myers and Michael Harris, began as papers presented at the 1995 conference on the history of the book trade held at the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House. Five of the seven contributors are Fellows of the Society. The publication is an attractive one, scholarly as well as enjoyable to read. It includes an agreeable range of subjects beginning with articles by David Pearson on book collectors in Oxford, 1550-1650, and Mirjam Foot on the bindings of scholar-collectors of a slightly later period. Pearson shows that scholars were rarely interested in their books as physical objects. Use was of greater consequence than fashion. On the other hand, Foot found that wealthy scholars and aristocratic-collectors of Europe, over a three-hundred-year period, were very much concerned with the outer appearance of their books which had to be handsome as well as serviceable. Myers offers a piece on the pioneer of Anglo-Norman studies, Andrew Coltee Ducarel, which gives an account of his life and aspects of
his work that is noted for its comparison of Anglo-Norman culture and ecclesiastical architecture. T.A. Birrell’s paper, focusing on John Gage (the early nineteenth-century director of the Society of Antiquaries of London), illuminates his taking medieval library and collecting career of Richard Heber, a true bibliomaniac in the longest essay in the volume. Janet Blackhouse’s description of ‘The sale of the Luttrell Psalter’ takes the reader behind the scenes as one of England’s great cultural treasures is preserved in the British Museum. Next, the illuminated manuscript collection of Edmond de Rothschild is discussed by Christopher de Hamel. Like Blackhouse’s article, Hamel focuses primarily on dispersal but his introductory comments on this outstanding collection of late-medieval manuscripts with their fantastic royal provenances is significant also because it sheds light on a collection that was almost secret due to its lack of catalogue or photographic record. The volume is completed by Bernard Nurse’s brief description of ‘The library of the Society of Antiquaries of London: acquiring antiquaries’ books over three centuries’.

Presented in The Book Trade and Its Customers is a collection of essays that serve to honour Robin Myers, a respected historian of the book trade, editor of the Publishing Pathways Series (devoted to studies in book trade and publishing history), Honorary Archivist of the Stationers’ Company, and recently elected President of the Bibliographical Society (London). In an introductory essay, D. F. McKenzie writes that the works ‘will be warmly welcomed by the ever-expanding body of scholars now recognizing the central value of book history to our understanding of past mentalities’ (xviii). Fittingly, the book focuses on two themes which Myers has spent considerable time amplifying during her career: the historical development of the British book trade and the history of book ownership, collecting, and libraries. (Indeed, the volume reviewed above underscores her many accomplishments.) This volume is formally divided into two parts: ‘The Book Trade’ and ‘The Customers’. In the first section, Anna Greening and Elisabeth Leedham-Green approach the sixteenth-century by presenting case studies of individual stationers in London and Cambridge (Richard Tottell and Manasses Vautrollier, respectively). David Pearson examines a seventeenth-century binding found on the third edition of Lewis Bayly’s The Practise of Pietie (London, 1613) and speculates on its including the arms of the Stationers’ Company. Three essays, by Arnold Hunt, Giles Mandelbrote, and Michael Harris, discuss attempts by booksellers and printers to protect their own interests in their relationships with authors, patentees, printspellers, and engravers. The London and Dublin book trades are discussed in essays by Scott Mandelbrote (on Bible printing) and James E. Tierney (on literary piracy and publishing). The section closes with studies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Michael L. Turner (‘A List of the Stockholders in the Worshipful Company of Stationers’, 1785) and Esther Potter (‘The changing role of the trade bookbinder, 1800-1900’).

The second part of The Book Trade and Its Customers opens with a case study by Christine Ferdinand on Magdalen College, Oxford, 1450-1550, and its role in the book trade. Three pieces in this section begin to place collecting and the world of books within their social, cultural and intellectual milieu: T. A. Birrell on Sir Edward Sherburne’s library; Alison Shell on John Clubbe, the antiquarian; and David J. Hall on Francis Fry, a bibliographer and maker of chocolate. James Raven writes on the Anglo-American book world of the late eighteenth-century, in ‘Gentlemen, pirates, and really respectable booksellers: some Charleston customers for Lackington, Allen and Co.’; Eiluned Rees describes the fine bindings housed in the National Library of Wales; and Michael Treadwell treats ‘Richard Lapthorne and the London retail book trade, 1683-1697’. The volume closes appropriately with a bibliography of Robin Myers’ publications and a short memoir of her by associates, including John Walwyn Jones’ sentiments: ‘It would be pleasant to imagine that the antiquarian book world was full of international variations on a theme of Robin Myers, but sadly it isn’t; she is indeed a rare tome, probably unique, and as such she is both valued and cherished’ (p. 302).

Both of these volumes add to an ever-growing amount of relevant and useful information on various aspects of book history. Professional scholars and aficionados alike should view them positively. The individual articles are, on the whole, well written and include beneficial notes, and both volumes are indexed. The accompanying illustrations serve to enhance these publications as well. If the sum of the works leans a trifle towards antiquarianism in their makeup, that can be forgiven because a (relatively) newly-developing discipline such as book history needs to have such pieces at hand in order to put together and complete the record. Several of the authors collected in these volumes, too, are from the antiquarian world and having such an orientation is quite understandable. The various sub-divisions of book history (printing, publishing, selling, collecting, etc.) provide an endless amount of little stories for us all to collect and use as we see fit. Importantly, what we need, what we are still waiting for, is more synthesis, more gathering up and interpreting from cultural, social, and intellectual points of view. The utility of these publications, of course, lies in their potential to be applied towards the larger, grander goals of the history of books. It should be noted that articles by James Raven (‘Gentlemen, pirates and really respectable booksellers’), Christine Ferdinand (‘Magdalen College and the book trade’), Arnold Hunt (‘Book trade patents, 1603-1640’) and David Pearson (‘Scholars and bibliophiles’), among others in these two volumes, indicate a rosy future and heighten our anticipation for full-fledged monographs in the field.

Robert A. Shaddy, University of Toledo


Burt Kimmelman and Kevin Pask each trace what they see as decisive stages in the genesis of modern ideas of authorship, and at the same time explore how developments in society reflect and
influence the nature of literary production. For Kimmelman the modern author grows out of poets’ philosophically-based explo-
rations in language theory between the twelfth and fourteenth cen-
turies, while for Pask the crucial moments are reflected in the
changing features of the ‘life of the poet’ genre between the early
lives of Chaucer and Samuel Johnson’s life of Milton. Authorship
is too slippery a concept to admit easily to firsts or origins, how-
ever. In the end, the origins of the modern author resist being pinned
down, since how one defines ‘modern’ and ‘author’ in large meas-
ure determines the where and when of the beginnings. The pro-
cess rather than the single defining moment is the important thing,
and claims of origin aside, Kimmelman and Pask each shed light
with varying success on this long process.

Kimmelman finds a distance or detachment between poet and
work in the twelfth century that to him represents the beginnings
of authorial self-consciousness, and he sees three figures as espe-
cially important to this change: the troubadour Marcabru at first,
and later Dante and Langland. Through a close reading of their
work, and particularly their inclusion of forms of themselves within
their works, Kimmelman charts the development of the modern
literary persona, culminating in Langland’s Will, a fictionalized
narrator detached from the person of the author William Langland.
Kimmelman argues that this is not simply a literary development,
but rather reflects a fundamental realignment of the liberal arts
after the twelfth century, when logic slowly displaced grammar
from the head of the trivium and when it moreover infused lan-
guage use with its ideas. The central development was a growing
separation of signifier and signified in theories of language based
on philosophical nominalism, a separation that influenced poets
and that allowed them considerable freedom to experiment with
language.

A peculiarity of this book is that its argument is more intu-
tively plausible than it is convincing in details. A central problem
is Kimmelman’s vagueness about the actual means of transmis-
sion of ideas back and forth between philosophy, poetry, and soci-
ety. He posits, validly to be sure, a connection between them, but
gives little indication of how this connection worked in practice,
a point that would make his argument far more persuasive than it is.
This is emphatically a work of intellectual history, with nary a
mention of manuscript transmission and only a few brief nods
towards readers (eg, p. 71–72). For Kimmelman, disembodied
ideas were in the air in the later Middle Ages, and he little con-
cerns himself with the details of exactly how they blew about from
place to place. We know nothing whatsoever about Marcabru’s
education, for example, besides what we can deduce from his
writings (seldom a reliable guide), and so cannot tell if his philo-
sophical echoes are at first or second hand, or even simply
commonplaces. And to argue that ‘Likely enough, Dante helped
to increase the importance of pronouns in the minds of thinkers
who came after him whether or not they actually knew of or had
even read his work’ (45) is utter nonsense. Linking ideas and soci-
ety without considering the physical means of transmission
leaves an awkward unbridged gap, a problem with this type of
intellectual history.

Another problem is Kimmelman’s almost medieval reliance
on received authority: often entire pages are composed mainly of
strung-together block quotations from secondary authors, usually
providing only background, but occasionally making
Kimmelman’s points. Almost half of the last fifteen pages of chap-
ter 4, for instance, are long quotations from other authors. If
Kimmelman had relied only on block quotations of secondary
sources it would mainly be an editorial annoyance, but he also
tends to mine his authorities for his own contextual primary
sources, particularly philosophical texts. Time and again he cites
medieval logical, rhetorical, or philosophical works via the foot-
notes of Marcia Colish, Janet Coleman, Jesse Gellrich, or others
(eg, 77–80, 138, 161–62). In a work whose central argument rests
on an attempt to put medieval literature in a philosophical con-
text, it is a grave problem indeed when that context is largely sec-
ond-hand.

Finally, Kimmelman’s reliance on authority also leads him to
adopt historical generalizations that may seem acceptable to liter-
ary scholars, but that send up red flags to historians. ‘Feudal soci-
ety’ is problematic enough when applied to socio-military rela-
tions in the early Middle Ages, but is virtually meaningless when
used as a blanket description of late medieval Europe (eg., 48,
59). Similarly, the ideas of ‘orality’ and ‘literate culture’ while
conceivably not meaningless, require more precise definition: it goes
too far to lump Dante’s Italy and Langland’s England into the
same unqualified ‘literate culture’.

Kevin Pask’s book is perhaps less ambitious than
Kimmelman’s; his claims to have found the origins of the modern
author are much more muted but is ultimately far more success-
ful. Pask surveys the life-narratives of five poets – Chaucer, Sidney,
Spenser, Donne, and Milton – and shows how broader social and
historical concerns shaped both the biographies of these individual
authors and the concept of authorship more generally. Along the
way, Pask makes important contributions to the histories of canon
formation and of the raising of English to a worthy literary lan-
guage.

Pask outlines his thesis in a brief introduction before exploring
it in five mostly self-contained case-study chapters. His main con-
cern is to show how the changing emphases and embroidery of
the life-narratives reflect broader social and intellectual concerns,
particularly those of the biographers who were working to canon-
ize their subjects. Thus Pask demonstrates how stories such as
Chaucer’s education and supposed stay at the Inns of Court con-
tribute both to valorizing his oeuvre against classical literature
and to elevating him to the status of national poet-laureate for the
young Tudor dynasty. The other chapters similarly illustrate Pask’s
‘both intertextual and historically contextual’ (p. 3) methodology
through discussions of the cultural uses biographers made of,
among other subjects, Sidney’s aristocratic valor, Spenser’s sup-
posed friendship with and patronage by Sidney, Donne’s way-
ward poetic youth versus his sober religious maturity, and Milton’s
domestic life. The result is an often fascinating trip through shift-
ing literary fortunes, incipient and changing canons, and varied
polemical and political uses of literature.

Perhaps the only weakness in Pask’s clearly argued and care-
fully researched book is a tendency, though less pronounced than
in Kimmelman’s case, to adopt overly-generalized historical con-
texts, often at third-hand via literary studies rather than from
historians. 'Late medieval feudalism' (9, 84) is so vague as to be virtually meaningless, and if it is permissible at all to call sixteenth-century England an 'absolutist state' (19, 53, 84), it certainly requires defence and explanation. The tendency to reach for easy terms instead of grappling with difficult historiographical debate illustrates how hard interdisciplinarity is; on the whole, however, Pask's history is considerably more nuanced than Kimmelman's, and the few unconsidered generalizations detract but little from the insights Pask gleans from the dialogues between history, society, and literature.

Eric H. Reiter, Concordia University, Montreal

**SHARP Correspondence**

I was sobered to read in a recent issue of *SHARP News*, in Sharp-end, that there has been a 'dearth of feedback'. (I read it first as a death of feedback, which is a little worse.) I don't know quite why you're not hearing from more of us. But I look forward to the newsletter as it arrives, make notes in it, tear out pages, etc. It seems to be very informative in its listings and the two or three longer pieces that lead off every issue.

My advice editorially would be to make the publication as lively as possible and to get a little loose. It's scholarly, and it's meant to be scholarly, but I don't know whether it has to be quite so sober-sided. You might as well have a little fun – or reveal the fun that lies in the study of those rectangular objects that command our attention and in many cases our lives.


One of the features which I have always valued in SHARP is its straightforward treatment of scholarly matters (and its scholarly treatment of straightforward matters), free from omnidirectional abstract nouns and widely ambiguous verbs. The *News* gives me useful information in a tone of voice which assures me that it is under scholarly control. There's no guff. But I think you may have to be careful when you give your reviewers their additional freedom.

Ian Michael, Bristol

The final paragraph in the Autumn issue of *SHARP News* has freed me from my self-imposed (and self-denying?) silence on seeing the main articles in the Spring issue. I failed to get into either of these: I had neither the inclination nor the time to peruse their polysyllables for meaning – communication, the sole (?) purpose of writing, had failed. Probably, however, I should have recalled Alexander Wollcott's tale of the broken-down tragedian sharing a park bench with a bedraggled and unappetising street-walker. 'Ah, Madame,' says he, 'quelle Ironie! The two oldies in the world – ruined by amateurs.'

I am proud to be an amateur of book-trade history (one aspect of the rather orotund 'history of the book') and, as such, greet the 'professionalisation' of the field with glad sadness. Glad I am in duty bound to be now that what I have been doing for over forty years, in spare moments from an active career in civil engineering, has been made academically respectable in this way; but sad that, as we have seen in sport, the professional rapidly drives out the amateur. (Is this, I wonder, yet another example of Gresham's Law?)

Dr F W Ratcliffe, in his paper 'The contribution of book-trade studies to scholarship' presented to the 1990 Seminar in Durham on the British Book Trade was vigorously dismissive of the mere amassing of detailed information by us amateurs. But we provide the straw for the making of bricks – straw the dull labour of whose collection only the amateur has the stomach for. If we are so misguided as to enjoy this labour, I hope that 'real' book historians will use our straw and will recognise that there is still a place for us in the new scheme of things.

Fred Ratcliffe goes on: 'Despite the 'History of the Book Trade in the North', other regional groups and annual seminars and conferences, their published works remain in the main apart, outside the required reading of scholars. It is a sobering thought that many of the articles ... will never come to the notice of many who need to read them. If the full potential of the study into the provincial book trade is to be brought before the scholarship, the subject needs to be focused and brought into an integrated whole.' In short Ratcliffe sees an essential role for the straw-gathering amateur. Do you Professionals agree with him? If so, then I can accept the new professionalism with glad gladness.

Peter Isaac, Past President, Bibliographic Society

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8/97
SHARPEND

Springtime in Edinburgh is always a contradiction, since the weather never seems to make up its mind on what to do. Or like SHARP, is getting altogether very busy. Echoing Mark Twain, I can safely say that this spring ‘I have counted one hundred and thirty-six different kinds of weather inside of four and twenty hours’. And in this issue of SHARP News, we count several reports on major book history developments. New centres have been launched in Edinburgh and Leiden, and major book projects on teaching and mapping out book history are underway in Germany and the U.S. Those with a particular interest in teaching book history should take note of the special session at the upcoming Vancouver SHARP conference dedicated to thrashing out issuing a reader on the subject. It is an idea long overdue for development, and should stimulate important debates on the matter. I look forward to seeing what comes out of this session.

Finally, two points regarding SHARP News. Over the next few months we will be making available an electronic archive of past SHARP News issues for viewing on the world wide web. It’s the closest thing to a chronicle of the society’s progress as we currently have, and really makes for some interesting comparisons. I hope everyone will be able to make use of it. Secondly, a correspondence section has been added featuring comments from readers, which seem to range from ‘lighten up’ to ‘keep us informed’. Perhaps for future issues you can start sending me book history related jokes? Preferably informative ones.... See you in Vancouver!