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NEW ZEALAND ISSUE

THE STATE OF BIBLIOGRAPHY IN NEW ZEALAND

I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED to do a controlled four-wheel slide. Perhaps this will be it. It began on 27 April, when the editor sent off a last-minute thought: 'New Zealand is one of the most concentrated centres of bibliographical activity in the world; why don't you tell us why?'

I wondered to begin with if he could be exaggerating—just a little. Had he over-reacted to the offer of a few pieces from those long accustomed to look abroad for a publisher? For no New Zealand journal, not even the elegant and hospitable *Turnbull Library Record*, is given up entirely to bibliographical writing, whether enumerative, descriptive, analytical, historical, or however else defined. Or had he been impressed, and rightly, with the high quality of that New Zealand export, his predecessor as editor, Dr. Brian McMullin? But Canada — as well as Britain — might well claim to have remade him, for McMullin's M.L.S. was earned at Western Ontario, under the supervision of Dr. W.J. Cameron, another expatriate Kiwi who had earlier taught him in Auckland.

Then I pondered that word 'concentrated'. Did it mean that the few were suspected of having a disproportionate influence? Was there, perhaps, a New Zealand Mafia in bibliography, as once in Early English Studies at Oxbridge — one thinks of Sisam, Bennett, Davis, and Gray? It would be surely then more proper to adopt the local New Zealand spelling of Mawhia! And who should be named as godfather if not Professor D.F. McKenzie of the Victoria University of Wellington, once President of *the* Bibliographical Society, a Lyell and a Sanders Lecturer, and future Panizzi Lecturer, a Trustee of the National Library, and Chairman of the New Zealand Early Imprints Project Committee? For over twenty years McKenzie has continued to 'enlarge' his subject (as one of his students said of his lectures) and inspire not only his own 'apprentices' — in the past two

years I have examined three of them — but scholars throughout the English-speaking world, and beyond.

However, the gang theory won't hold. McKenzie's influence is visibly and legitimately exercised. And he would be the first not only to insist that he is no one-man band, but to acknowledge independent operators in the field. If our editor is right, are there then other influences which favour bibliographical scholarship in New Zealand? Something in the soil or climate? Timaru in South Canterbury — where the lamb comes from — was once home to McKenzie, to Dr. Roger Collins (who appears later in this number) and to the present writer.

Certainly, it can be denied, despite the centralising tendency of modern government, that there exists a state organisation responsible for directing bibliographical research. Kathleen Coleridge's 'work in progress', reported in *New Zealand Libraries* for December 1983 as 'Printing in Wellington: the pioneer period', forms part of no grand collaborative scheme for the History of the Book in New Zealand — her study contributing perhaps to the history of the Central Region. Such enterprises are better ordered in France by the national Centre de recherches d'histoire et de philologie.

The reality over here is characteristically pragmatic and, perhaps regrettably, more modest. The New Zealand Library Resources Committee, set up by the Trustees of the National Library, has, in addition to its main function of helping to develop collections, a little money to spend on research projects, including the bibliographical. In 1983, for instance, it sponsored D.R. Harvey's survey of holdings of New Zealand newspapers up to 1939. And its Sub-committee of New Zealand Bibliographical Services, though without funds to distribute, has a duty to observe current bibliographic work, and to identify areas still needing attention. Here is a source of ideas and of encouragement for those willing to undertake projects characteristically of wide utility, if too often deemed to be rather pedestrian in nature.

Such projects are very often tackled by librarians, as one of their many services to scholarship — contributions, I would say, for that word 'service', much favoured by librarians, may be wrongly taken to mean that someone else will later provide the scholarship. More of this later. I ask now about the training of all such scholars.

If librarians, they will have learned much about bibliography while studying for their diploma in librarianship. The Department of Librarianship at Victoria University, founded in 1979 and headed since its inception by Professor Roderick Cave, teaches a (graduate) course entitled 'The history of the book'. Elsewhere in their training students also learn how to 'compile' enumerative bibliographies, inferentially a lesser thing to do. Further scope for intending bibliographers is provided by an M.A. in Librarianship by thesis.

Others will have taken their first bibliographical steps while completing a degree in English at Auckland, Wellington, or Dunedin. In 1949 an optional paper 'Methods and techniques of scholarship' entered the then University of New Zealand syllabus for the M.A. in English language and literature. Three of the four main constituent institutions — Auckland University College, Victoria University College, and the University of Otago — thereupon listed such a paper. First to teach it was Victoria, in 1949, followed by Auckland in 1950.

At Auckland the teaching was shared by Sydney Musgrove, the Head of Department, and Elizabeth Sheppard, who continued for many years to teach the palaeography side of it. Meanwhile, at Victoria, Professor Ian Gordon was surveying the whole tradition of English studies. (I sat in on his lectures while a temporary junior lecturer, and still have the scrappy notes to prove it.) Otago followed suit in 1958, when with encouragement from the newly arrived professor, Alan Horsman, I offered my first course, with help from the University Librarian, Peter Havard-Williams, and shortly after from David Esplin.

The content of the 'Methods' paper was necessarily broad and various. Auckland in 1950 advised that theirs would 'include work in palaeography, textual criticism, bibliography, editorial method, and research technique'. This breadth of conception has persisted, emphases shifting in tune with the interests of teachers and the needs of pupils. In the 1950s at Victoria, S.G. (George) Culliford, for instance, recognising the primary function of literary scholarship to be the establishment of the text, focussed attention on the text of Shakespeare. Culliford was of course inspired by the recent rapid advances in what was often then termed historical bibliography, interpreted, by literary students in particular, as being the study of textual transmission by means of the printed word, and especially in the era of the hand-press. The bibliographer's bible was R.B. McKerrow's *Introduction to bibliography for literary students* (Oxford, 1927). The excitement was not only to share in a growing and rigorous discipline, but to learn, after an undergraduate experience limited to modern reprints, what might be gained by studying original forms of the text. The scope and quality of Culliford's course is revealed in his substantial *Introduction to the textual study of Shakespeare*, which circulated in cyclostyled form. My copy reached me, rather late, in 1961.

At Auckland there was from the beginning a strong emphasis on palaeography fostered by Dr. Elizabeth Sheppard. However, a knowledge of the processes of textual transmission by printing was obviously the new thing to have, and not only theoretical. Bill Cameron at Auckland was the first to set up a printing workshop, with its obligatory Albion hand-press. This was in 1958. (The facts are very briefly set out in Philip Gaskell, 'The Bibliographical Press Movement', *Journal of the Printing Historical Society*, no.1, 1965 and in B.J. McMullin, 'Bibliographical Presses in Australia and New Zealand', *BSANZ Bulletin*, 3(2), 1977). The use of this printing-press was revived six or seven years ago by an ex-student from the course, Philip Ridge. Otago was next: David Esplin and I set

up our Albion in 1961. We were followed in 1962 by Don McKenzie at Victoria, whose Wai-te-ata Press still flourishes. The model for all these operations was no doubt the similar foundations at University College, the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and King's College, Cambridge. My debt is to the Bibliography Room in Bodley, though I learned how to work an old hand-press chiefly by printing such pieces as James K. Baxter's *The Lion Skin*, 1967, with the Davis and Carter edition of Moxon's *Mechanick exercises* open before me. I do not forget what practical hints, as about the use of bearers, I got from old jobbing printers.

'Methods' courses with a strong bibliographical component continue to be offered at Auckland, Wellington, and Otago. Canterbury has always remained aloof. At Auckland Associate Professor MacDonald Jackson took over the bibliographical side from Bill Cameron in 1964, and, when Elizabeth Sheppard retired in 1972, gradually developed the paper into Bibliography and Textual Criticism. Essentially it has consisted of the elements of enumerative, descriptive, and analytical bibliography, with a Shakespearean emphasis in keeping with his own particular bent. (I am much obliged to 'Mac' Jackson for patiently answering my last-minute inquiries about his Department.) Don McKenzie has been going strong at Victoria since 1961, not only within the English Department, but by guest-lecturing at the then Library School. With the recent setting up in Victoria University of the Department of Librarianship under Roderick Cave this extra work has necessarily gone to others. At Otago since 1974 bibliographical instruction of various kinds has moved up to the post-graduate level, taking advantage of the increase in the number of such students. The challenge, and difficulty, has been to devise courses useful to people beginning research in widely different fields. Among the 'methods' that we plan to teach are the many uses of computers and word-processors in literary scholarship. Massey University at Palmerston North has also got in on the act. In 1983, Dr. John Ross introduced a graduate level (fourth year) paper 'Scholarship', similar — he tells me — to courses once held at Victoria, where he was once a pupil of McKenzie's. Ross, too, has his Bibliography Room, which he fondly refers to as the Alde Press.

Bibliography is also learned on the job, by the more or less well-founded amateur. Such people are not easy to trace. Two came to my notice because I was writing this report. These were scholars busy at their own specialities, but also working, in spare moments, on aspects of printing and publishing history. The lesson I draw from such chance encounters is that the progress of bibliographical scholarship is not to be measured only by the achievements of recognised scholars, but by the range, utility and quality — these two are not to be separated — of the work being done out there often many years away from publication. That this is not just extravagant generalisation from two lucky meetings is supported by reference to a work of enumerative bibliography which has appeared seventeen times over the last twenty-two years. This is *Bibliographical work in New Zealand. . . work in progress and work published*, 'compiled', currently, by A.P.U. Millett and F.T.H. Cole, at the University of Waikato Library. In their 1983 issue, Millett and Cole list 228 items, either in progress — there are 125 of these — or published since June 1982 — 103 of these — though the two categories

overlap. The writers of this valuable work know well how incomplete their coverage is. For one thing, 'not all bibliographers to whom questionnaires were sent replied', they say. Then, their stated policy is to list only 'enumerative and subject bibliographies. Textual bibliography, printing, publishing and book trade history are covered by other lists such as: W. and J.L. Kirsop, 'Bibliography in and about Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific: a first check list for the years 1969 to 1972' (*BSANZ Bulletin*, no.5, 1972, 88-138). It must at once be objected that the Kirsop check-list has not been updated, so that here is a gap which ought to be filled.

However, the Millett and Cole principles of selection are generously interpreted. In their 1983 issue, for instance, they list the analytical and descriptive work of K.A. Coleridge on 'The printing and publishing of Clement Walker's *History of Independency 1647-1661*' (since published in *BSANZ Bulletin*, 8 (1984), 22-61). Furthermore, their principles of selection themselves are by no means exclusive. Where can one put an end to subject bibliography, or to the reach or depth of such studies? The problem is always to decide how deeply to go into the subject, and how much to write about it, but these are no criteria for inclusion in or rejection from a list of bibliographical work, especially work in progress. Nor should a double standard be allowed to creep into the distinction between enumerative and descriptive bibliography, the former scanted as requiring merely a routine work of compilation, the latter somehow meriting the name of scholarly. This was a snobbery encouraged by Fredson Bowers in an otherwise praiseworthy effort to claim scholarly respectability for truly bibliographical endeavours: for instance the deep analysis of some eighty copies of the Shakespeare *First Folio*. All 'bibliographies are historical studies', states G.T. Tanselle, an axiom which he nevertheless justifies at length in 'The arrangement of descriptive bibliographies' (*Studies in Bibliography*, 37 (1984) 1-38). Our respect for recent great achievements in descriptive and analytical bibliography should not blind us to the perennial value of what is too often put down as enumerative bibliography. 'When the bibliographer has brought books to light and printed lists of them, . . . I submit that he has done a great part of what can reasonably be expected of him', so A.W. Pollard much earlier this century, quoted exultantly by R.C. Alston in a recent review of Roy Stokes, *The Function of Bibliography*, second edition, 1982 (*Library*, 6th Ser., 6 (1984) 79-84). And why not exultant, given Alston's own achievement in leading the Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue project to near completion with the aid of the new computer technology? This is just one of many exciting new bibliographical schemes, enumerative in nature, which prompt Alston to exclaim: 'if ever there was a time when enumerative bibliography has had to re-examine its objectives and methodology it is now, and there are indications that the fruits of this re-examination will alter radically the methods by which research is carried out, and the kinds of research undertaken'.

Such thoughts and such examples challenge bibliographers in New Zealand as elsewhere both to undertake projects once only dreamed after drinking deep

late at night, and to see that a more nearly complete round-up of bibliographical work, strays and all, is achieved.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

We apologise to subscribers for the lateness of this issue; it is partly a result of editorial injury. Thanks are due to Mr Brian Gerrard (Assistant Editor), Dr Mary Dove and Dr Brian McMullin for the extra work they have taken on in the past weeks.

An apology is also due to Mr Ian F. McLaren for the inexcusable omission of his name from the end of his article 'Publishers' Author Advertisements' in our previous issue. The omission resulted from a last-minute technical mishap. The 'Appendix I' referred to on p.125 of Mr McLaren's article is now scheduled to appear under the title 'Angus & Robertson Author Advertisements 1895-1939' in a forthcoming issue of the *Bulletin*.

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