

Preface

When the idea of a festschrift was raised with Harold a few months before his death, he protested at first that such an honour was unnecessary but went on to suggest that, if we planned to proceed, a memorial volume of *Script & Print* would be appropriate. The choice was a natural one: Harold was the founding Secretary of the BSANZ (1969–74), the inaugural Editor of its *Bulletin* (1970–76, 1979) and a regular contributor to its pages. His achievements included, as Wallace Kirsop noted in his obituary here two years ago, “the most remarkably sustained burst of creative work in bibliography and textual editing ever done by an Australian-born scholar.”

At the same time, Harold’s interests extended far beyond physical bibliography; his appetite for knowledge and ideas of all sorts was as insatiable as his memory was phenomenal. He read *Private Eye* with as much pleasure as he read Horace (in Latin), and he enjoyed German detective novels (in German) no less than the challenge of deciphering seventeenth-century handwriting. He published in areas as diverse as Chinese theatre on the Victorian goldfields, computational stylistics, and fiddlers on the Restoration stage; and in all his endeavours, as his friend and colleague Keith Maslen recalls, “what stood out were the range of his intellectual curiosity and his ability and determination to reach the point of finest understanding,” activated always by “his characteristic independence of thought.” Harold’s network was a correspondingly large one that crossed disciplines and continents. For these reasons, some of the papers presented here fall outside the usual scope of *Script & Print*, but all of them reflect Harold’s professional interests as well as his generous encouragement of students and colleagues.

The task of compiling a record of Harold’s prodigious scholarly output has been daunting enough, but one wishes it had been possible to include in his bibliography more of his ephemeral writing as well. For example, Harold was co-editor of the student newspaper *Semper Floreat* at the University of Queensland in 1958 and contributed signed (and no doubt unsigned) reviews and editorials, all of which displayed his distinctively erudite wit. With his co-editor Anthony Paul he also produced a single issue of the spoof journal *Reader’s Dig it* for the University of Queensland Union. A short play from around the same time, *Perverse Juventus*, was acted annually for several years by students.

From the time he moved to Monash in 1964 Harold was active in Melbourne as a viol and recorder player and wrote occasional pieces for the Early Music Society of Victoria newsletter, for Opera Australia and for radio broadcasts. Among his music friends he is perhaps best remembered for his hilarious reworking of Bach’s *Peasant Cantata* as *The Cow-Cockie’s Cantata*, in which the wedding festivities take place in the fictional Australian town of Boonawalla (typescript in the Fryer Library). In a similar vein, he supplied the libretto for Anne Carr-Boyd’s comic opera *Roberto di Boonawalla*, held in manuscript by the State Library of New South Wales.

Harold edited the the first four numbers of *Symposium: Newsletter of the Australian Academy of the Humanities* in 1995 and 1996, and still found time to appear in the letters page of the *Age* and in the *Monash Reporter*. He also supervised the publication of seven bibliographical checklists and other substantial internal texts from within the English Department. For reasons of space, however, we have had to restrict his bibliography mostly to works for which there is an ISSN or ISBN.

There has been sadness, too, in finding in Harold's files unpublished material marked "In advanced draft, October 2006," "Possibles" or "In limbo." Let us hope that at least some of this material can one day be edited for its intended audience.

At the end of their year together on *Semper Floreat*, Anthony Paul commented that, while unlikely, his co-editor "would be a sensation as editor of a more hysterical New York tabloid." Happily for us, Harold chose instead to pursue the scandals of the Restoration court and the drama of the playhouse in an exceptional career that spanned almost half a century. We are honoured to offer in this memorial volume a tribute to his life and work. The title, "Superior in his Profession," is taken from Roger North's memoir of John Jenkins (1592–1678), Harold's favourite composer.

This volume of *Script & Print* marks the end of Patrick Spedding's three-year term as editor, and it is timely to acknowledge the exceptional energy and commitment he has brought to the role, producing issues of a uniformly high standard and bringing the bulletin up to date at last. On behalf of the BSANZ we welcome Shef Rogers as editor in 2010 and wish him all the best as he takes up the reins across the Tasman.

M. S.