



Call for Papers

Local Bibliography - ‘The Deepening Stream’

*The Annual Conference of the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Inc.
University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand 20–22 November 2016*



Campbell Smith, *Bridges of Hamilton City*, 2004

Since 1769, streams of print artefacts, manuscripts, images and ephemera have proliferated across Australasia, like a shingle river bed, braided from “many streams, although divided and widely separated” (M. H. Holcroft, 1940). These show no signs of abating.

BSANZ 2016 invites scholars and researchers to consider the printed word, the book, and texts of all kinds on the micro-scale of the community, examining communities of readers, of writers, of the book and of print.

We invite proposals particularly linked to the topics below, although papers on any matters of bibliographical interest, traditional and contemporary, are also welcome:

Local and regional printers and publishers and their networks

Specialty and independent bookstores – their history and the communities they serve

Local and regional press – newspapers, newsletters, periodicals, almanacs

Print and online publications and ephemera of counter-culture, grassroots and activist movements

Authors and illustrators

Indigenous printing and indigenous languages in print

Local, regional and national book clubs

DIY publication, ’zines and comics

The bibliographical and book historical community in Australia and New Zealand
– past, present and future

A one-page proposal and a brief biography of the author, including full name, professional designation (professor, librarian, graduate student, etc) and institutional affiliation or place, should be submitted to kparsons@waikato.ac.nz. Those invited to present papers must be or become members of the Society.

The deadline for submission of abstracts is **Friday 20 May 2016**.

The venue

Hamilton is New Zealand's fourth city with a population of 160,000 people. It is about 1.5 hours' drive south of Auckland. The University of Waikato was founded in 1964 during a time of educational expansion in New Zealand and today has approximately 12,000 students. In addition to Arts, Sciences, Social Sciences and Business, it has a strong programme in Maori Studies. The University Library is tasked with supporting the teaching programmes of the University.

Although Hamilton has an airport and scheduled flights from other New Zealand cities, conference goers coming from afar will probably be better off taking a shuttle bus direct from Auckland Airport to Hamilton or one of the intercity bus services or a rental car. Details of transport and accommodation options will be available very soon on the Society's webpage. Details of transport and accommodation options will be available very soon on the Society's webpage www.bsanz.org.

Melbourne Rare Book Week

The Society will again sponsor an event for this impressive gathering of book-focused activities which runs 14th to 24th July 2016, with the last two days being occupied by the Antiquarian Book Fair.

Our speaker this year will be Lucy Sussex who will be talking on small press publishers of the 1880s including Kemp and Boyce who published Fergus Hume's *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* on Monday 18 July. Lucy who published *Blockbuster!: Fergus Hume and the Mystery of a Hansom Cab* in 2015 is also leading a walk during Rare Book Week round central Melbourne sites connected with the novel.

Committee and Council for 2015-16

BSANZ is run by a Committee advised by a Council, members of which are elected at the AGM. By convention the Council members

are elected on a geographical basis, with one Councillor from each of the Australian States and two representatives from New Zealand. Any member in good standing (ie paid-up) is eligible to nominate for a position on Council or Committee. The committee members and councillor elected for 2016 are:

Committee

President Donald Kerr (University of Otago)
Vice-President Anthony Tedeschi (National Library of New Zealand)
Secretary Chris Tiffin (University of Queensland)
Treasurer Jan McDonald (State Library of Victoria)

Council

Immediate Past President John Arnold
Editor Shef Rogers
Webmaster David Large
NZ Kathryn Parsons

NZ Iain Sharp
WA Erin Fraser
SA Ray Choate
Tas Ian Morrison
Vic Dennis Bryans
ACT Margaret Dent and Bryan Colborne
NSW Maggie Patton
Qld Bill Krebs

The ACT Council representatives have embarked upon a project to bring together people interested in bibliography, printing and book arts who live in and around Canberra. Commencing modestly with an occasional lunch meeting, they advise that depending on the level of interest they may stage more formal talks or workshops down the track.

The NLA under Attack

Of all the weasel words econocrats have dumped on us, the most vile and repugnant must surely be “efficiency dividends”

which in the lexicon of Old Honest English means “funding cuts”. The latest round of these suffered by the National Library of Australia has bitten so deeply that the Library is having to suspend all work on the magnificent digitisation project we know as Trove. Research on just about any topic in Australian studies of the last 150 years now seems inconceivable without this tool which includes the mass digitisation of the back-runs of our most important newspapers.

There is a petition opposing the funding cuts which interested members may want to sign. It has just under 10,000 signatories to date and the promoters are keen to crack that milestone before presenting it to the digital-friendly Australian government. You will find the petition at <https://www.change.org/p/malcolm-turnbull-mp-stop-cuts-to-national-library-of-australia-save-trove>

Thinking about the Local

Coming from the Latin word *locus*, “local” is intrinsically connected with place. Its sense is prescribed by its antonyms: in different contexts the local is opposed to the regional, the national, the global or the universal. Recently the word has had currency in relation to food, as the locavore movement extols the virtues of eating produce grown close to where a person lives, partly to ensure that the food is fresh, partly to minimise the cost and environmental destructiveness of unnecessary transportation, and partly to sustain a dispersed economy based on geographically smaller units of society. There may be some nostalgia for pre-industrial days in this, but the movement has some heavy-weight supporters who see eating local food as being responsible in a forward-looking way. As ethicist Peter Singer has said, “If people are prepared to eat locally and seasonally, then they probably do pretty well in terms of environmental impact.”

The local is also associated with personal interaction, sociability and affability. The village is seen as the site of mutual awareness, dependence, caring and responsibility, whereas the mega-city is judged to be a site of impersonality, self-preoccupation and selfish insouciance. In fact the city bends under the weight of its unsociability to throw up its own localised groups and places. Sydney has adopted “city of villages” as its motto (which didn’t stop Dale Campisi writing a book about Melbourne with that as its title), San Diego has a “city of

villages” planning strategy, and in an only-in-America bizarreness Florida has an adults-only community for golfers called “The Villages” which with a population of over 150,000 is the fastest-growing city in the US. Within the city, “the local” is a pub or café of which the clientele almost exclusively lives nearby. It recreates the dynamic of the village where identification with place nurtures group knowledge, geniality and feelings of interconnectedness and mutual responsibility.

The local is also a driver of tourism. If the first criterion for a satisfying touristic experience today is to photograph oneself in a remarkable place, the second is to feel that one has some sort of exclusive access to a genuine otherness. The post-trip complaint “there were too many tourists there” testifies ultimately to a sense of failed authenticity. One can overlook one’s own falsification of the zeitgeist in visiting the charming Bulgarian village, but encountering three busloads of tourists on a parallel quest makes it harder to pretend that one is privileged to observe the locals going about their business in the exact manner they have been doing for centuries.

In theoretical debate, the local has been criticised as parochial, closed, static and defensive, whereas the cosmopolitan is painted as open, efficient, innovative and progressive. Much of the history of technology reflects this view as do orthodoxies in business, marketing and urban planning. But there are dissenting voices among ethicists, environmentalists and artists who do not see unmitigated benefit in global progress and homogenization no matter how efficient it can claim to be. As John Tomaney points out, “Often it is an intense engagement with the local that allows the artist to develop insights into the question of how we should live.” (“Parochialism: a Defence”, *Progress in Human Geography* 37.5(2013): 658-72 (666)).

What then for local bibliography? Does it in some way draw from and simultaneously dramatise or even reify these values of authenticity, community, individuality, sustainability, and variety? Does it recuperate valuable human endeavour in danger of being erased or overlooked by a hegemonic cosmopolitan tradition? Does it embody in some special way humanistic values that exceed the specificities of its technical, geographical and industrial parameters? The conference organisers have proposed a smorgasbord of sub-topics and themes for the conference, reminding us of the diaspora of endeavour that constitutes the printing, publishing, and bookselling trades, and underpins book culture. It will be interesting to see if the conference presenters discover overlaps and resonances between “local bibliography” and the “local” that we encounter in other aspects of life as they research and work up their papers. At any rate, we will all be much more knowledgeable about this topic as we leave Hamilton after the conference in November.

Chris Tiffin

2016 BSANZ conference

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University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand

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