



“Connecting the Colonies: Empires and Networks in the History of the Book”

Royal Society Rooms, Hobart, Tasmania (22–24 November 2017)

The 2018 conference was carried off with great success in a sort of disciplinary entente with postcolonial studies (which was predictable from the title) and church history (which was not). The conference opened with Rodney Thomson’s keynote address, “Tasmania’s (and Australia’s) Earliest Books,” that showcased some of the treasures of the University of Tasmania collection while also presenting a history of Christ College and its library that found its way to the University.

If the last Hobart conference was memorable for the apple-box labels paper, this one will be remembered for the nexus of papers clustered around religious themes, whether Keith Adkins’ suggestion that a newly built Anglican seminary outside Launceston was abandoned partly because the librarian refused to remove a too-Romish book from the collection, or Samir de Angelo’s argument that despite the repression of Brazilian tribes’ religious stories, their recording as anthropological data by the Salesian missionaries has allowed them to continue as cultural practice through the book as a fetishised object. Joanna Cruickshank discussed the publishing history of sermons in early New South Wales and their typical content, dropping in such gems as the Rev. Richard Johnson’s optimistically including in his First Fleet luggage 100 copies of a sermon “Dissuasion from Stealing.” Other forms of evangelical publishing were discussed by Elizabeth Freeman (13th century Cistercian nuns’ cartularies), and Sandra Hudd (1880s children’s narratives of heroic evangelism in Asia). Eric Anderson explored 1860s debates about the moral effects of reading including the curious claim that lax copyright laws made for cheaper books, thereby producing a more moral populace.

Early Australian printing history was treated by Dennis Bryans on the introduction of monotype (by Government printers more than commercial ones), and by Jocelyn Hargrave discussing editorial practices and John Degotardi’s 1861 manual on them. Kevin Molloy and Katie Flack described the first Australian-published emigration memoir, the 1857 *Sea-Life and Adventure*, and its publishers, the Melbourne firm of Shanley and Glason.

Governor George Grey was the subject of two papers taking unusual approaches. Donald Kerr treated Grey’s Australian expeditions, particularly his sympathetic dealings with the Aborigines, while Georgia Prince outlined a correspondence between him and nursing reformer, Florence Nightingale, speculating that they might even have met in London.

Some papers went down unusual byroads for BSANZ. Evija Trofimova described the restrictive book publication in Latvia under Soviet rule, speculating that the current reactionary purging of such ‘compulsory’ books might be so comprehensive as to erase forty years of publishing history. Papers by Cecilia Leong-Salobir and Nicki Tarulevicz linked publishing and food preparation, the former with a paper on early Indian cookbooks for British readers (or diners), and the latter on government publications and programmes to encourage kitchen hygiene in Singapore.

This is only a partial account of the more than forty papers read at the conference. Abstracts of all the papers can be found on the Society’s website.

At the Society's AGM the Committee reports were accepted as satisfactory, and Ian Morrison and his team were warmly congratulated on a splendid conference, but the notable moments were in the contributions from members. There was closer scrutiny of Society procedures such as the criteria for acceptance of papers for both conferences and *Scrip & Print*, and an enthusiastic push into digital communications by the Society. Nicholas Sparks of Sydney University agreed to serve as reviews editor, so please contact him if you see a book you would like to review that you think would also interest our members (bsanz.reviews@gmail.com). The digital push is intended to produce a more dynamic webpage, and initiate Facebook and Twitter presences. This initiative is being led by Jocelyn Hargrave of Monash University. If you have skills to offer and are interested in being involved, please contact her (jocelyn.hargrave@monash.edu). Flagged, but not fully discussed at the meeting, was an apprenticeship scheme for the major roles in the Society both to engage members and to introduce an orderly succession of the roles.

Melbourne Rare Book Week

On the 7th July as part of Rare Book Week, an enthusiastic audience of 55 were treated to a beguiling meander through the world of early illustrated books at the University of Melbourne. BSANZ Vice-President, Professor Véronique Duché (recently returned from Lyon, and serenely suppressing a stiff dose of jet lag), captivated the gathering with a stimulating commentary, slide presentation and book viewing in the Leigh Scott Room of the Baillieu Library.

Véronique examined the relationship between text and image in early modern Europe, drawing on highlights from the Baillieu's Rare Book Collection to illustrate her talk, examples from which were on display for closer inspection in the room. Amongst the procession of delights were the whimsical illustrations of the *Hortus Sanitatis* (1491), a cavalcade of woodcuts from the *Nuremberg Chronicle* (1493), and the exquisitely refined engravings from the French edition of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1546). Also featuring were examples of hand-coloured woodblock prints from Antoine

Verard's printed *Book of Heures* (1520), and the influential engravings of Jean de Tournes' edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1553).

Véronique described how the presentation of the printed book in the Renaissance was often a matter of experimentation, as an explicit response to the rapid technological developments taking place in typography and printing. Examples of pictorial reproduction techniques such as xylographs, block prints, wood cuts and copperplate engravings were shown, finishing with some entrancing 18th century plates from Denis Diderot's *Encyclopédie*. Véronique explained the way in which the inclusion of illustrations affected the organisation and layout of early publications, which in turn had consequences for the placement and presentation of text and its reading.

Also leaping out from the fascinating works presented on screen were fiery images from John Babington's 17th century manual *Pyrotechnia* (1635), grotesque flayed anatomical drawings from Vesalius' *De humanis corpori fabrica* (1543) and a selection of

bizarre monster-like woodcuts of deformities from Aldrovandi's *Monstrorum historia* (1642). Véronique's evocative descriptions of these strange imaginings entranced the audience, and provided those in the room with some rich imagery to take away to stimulate their own vivid nightmares!

Susan Thomas



BSANZ 2018 Brisbane

The Committee has accepted Simon Farley's offer to convene the 2018 conference in Brisbane at the University of Queensland, November 28-30, with the theme, "Bibliography at the Margins."

SHARP 2018 Sydney

"From First to Last: Texts, Creators, Readers, Agents"

July 9-12 July 2018

Reminder: The Call for Papers can be found on the SHARP webpage: sharpweb.org. The crucial date for submission of abstracts is 30 November 2017, with acceptances being notified in February 2018.

Melbourne Australasian Rare Book School

The next regional Rare Book School will run 29 January-2 February 2018, in Melbourne at State Library Victoria. On offer are a five-day course on "The Medieval Book," and three-day courses on "Photography and the Photographic Print" and "Rare Book Cataloguing." You can get further details of presenters, costs and syllabuses from this link: <https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/live-learn/melbourne-australasian-rare-books-summer-school>

Exhibitions

"Bird Woman: Elizabeth Gould and the Birds of Australia" is the title of an exhibition at the Allport Library, Hobart that seeks to recuperate the reputation of John Gould's wife, whose substantial contribution to the illustrations in Gould's various bird books have not been recognised. The exhibition closes on 27 January 2018 so will be running during the BSANZ conference in November.

BSANZ the Publisher

Did you know that in addition to *Script & Print*, BSANZ publishes short monographs and full-length books on bibliographical and history of the book topics? If you have a research project nearing its conclusion and would like it to be considered for publication, contact the editor of BSANZ's Occasional Publications series, Assoc. Professor Brian McMullin, brian.mcmullin@arts.monash.edu.au.

What should we do with the *Broadsheet* ?

Given that the *Broadsheet*'s role is primarily informational and that information these days mostly moves about electronically, it is perhaps time to question whether the effort put into issuing a paper version of our newsletter could be more effective if expended in other ways.

Looking back over 20 years or so of *Broadsheet* issues, I was struck by just how much information about bibliographical events in the region over the years it contains. There is also a great deal of information about the Society itself – its conferences, publications, and decisions about its direction, procedures and finances. There have also been a few pieces that are more tendentious, although these were mostly preparing for, or reporting on, conferences. But what will members in 2018 want from the publication? In the age of the ubiquitous web page, is it redundant?

To determine how the Society should proceed on this matter, the Committee would be very grateful for your responses to all, some, or any of these questions:

1. Should the *Broadsheet* be discontinued?
2. Should the *Broadsheet* become an online-only publication?
3. Should the *Broadsheet* be issued at regular intervals rather than appearing with *Script & Print*?
4. Are the present contents of the *Broadsheet* appropriate and useful from your point of view?
5. Can you suggest other types of material that should be included in addition to, or in lieu of, the current content?
6. Did you know that (some) back issues of the *Broadsheet* can be found on the Society's webpage?
7. Would you like to contribute to the *Broadsheet*?
8. Would you like to edit the *Broadsheet*?

Please email your thoughts on any aspect of the *Broadsheet* about which you feel even moderately strongly to Chris Tiffin c.tiffin@uq.edu.au for compilation and presentation to the Committee. To some extent the responses to the parallel enquiry into the Society's webpage may have a bearing on the future of the *Broadsheet*. The Committee would like to act promptly on both these matters in 2018.



What better way to demonstrate your total commitment to bibliography, librarianship or the history of the book than by casually draping your jacket over the chair of the Promotions Interview Room to reveal this snappy book-themed lining? Independent tests on HR psychology show that it works a treat every time.