



“Tradition and Innovation: Readers, Books and Libraries”

28–29 November 2019

Conference Report

The conference was co-hosted by the Australian Library History Forum. BSANZ conferences have had various levels of organizational sponsorship, partnership, and adjunction over the years, most obviously with the Rare Book Librarians Group, the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publication and the book:logic Group, but also the Australian Academy of the Humanities, the Australian Studies Association, and even the Australian Garden History Society.¹ There is no other group, however, whose interests overlap more clearly than the Australian Library History Forum. As Mary Carroll commented succinctly, library history’s methodology may not always be exciting but the history *is* important. The formal collaboration of this group with BSANZ was long overdue, and will no doubt fruitfully continue.

After the Welcome to Country, the conference opened with a presentation to Professor Wallace Kirsop of the newly inaugurated BSANZ Award for contribution to bibliographical studies. In his acceptance address Wal spoke of his own long involvement in both BSANZ and the Australian Library History Forum, but eschewed nostalgia to concentrate on the future. Recalling one of the original aims of BSANZ to have been the promotion of knowledge of archives and collections he offered a desiderata of major reference tools which he enjoined the Society to involve itself in. These included a comprehensive guide to archival and MS material related to Australian and New Zealand bibliography and book history, a historical dictionary of Australian and New Zealand newspapers, and a biographical dictionary of book trade practitioners from the region. Noting that there were good models for the last two in French, Wal reminded the conference that not all interesting, intriguing and important publications were written in English, and that bibliographers needed to emerge from the comfortable blinkers of monolingualism.

BSANZ 2019 was a parallel-session conference with a latitudinarian catch-all theme. As has been discussed on many an organizing committee, with a fixed duration for the conference, the parallel session mode allows for more platform participants and therefore more attendees, but less progressive coherence in the discussion. In practice, it also results in less adherence by the speakers to the conference theme and to the core interests of the Society. This may be a reason for the disappointing percentage of papers from our conference that find their way into *Script & Print* despite the energetic invitations of the editor. Also, at other learned conferences where the number of simultaneous sessions runs into double figures, the audience can be spread so thinly that there are occasionally as many people on the stage as in the audience. BSANZ conferences have so far avoided this indignity.

No doubt with an eye to maximising attendance, SHARP 2020 in Amsterdam is experimenting with extremely short-form presentations, the “lightning paper” and the “poster presentation”. The lightning paper is a five-minute talk which the organisers pace at five per hour, so, allowing for a couple of minutes for changeover time there would also be five minutes each for questions. As a writing exercise it would certainly clarify the mind; in fact, in 2008 the University of Queensland introduced a competition for its doctoral students to explain their thesis project in just three minutes which has been so successful that it has spread around the world.² The usefulness of such short-form

explication at an academic/professional conference is less clear, however. The “poster presentation” is the display of a poster (usually A3 or a bit bigger) visually laying out a project, product or technique in the hope that someone will stroll by and ask fascinated questions of you. Since the poster sessions in Amsterdam are planned for a lunch hour this form of presentation ranks even lower than the five-minute lightning paper which does get a real spot on the programme even if as intellectual exchange it uncannily resembles speed-dating.

Even in a two-stream conference one hears little more than half the papers, and a report is necessarily partial (in the fractional, not the attitudinal, sense). Nevertheless, I was struck by the way two methods or impulses seemed to be prominent in some of the papers. The first is a classificatory one. I’m thinking of Russell Goulborne’s analysis of the forms of marginalia in Voltaire’s library which expanded from an aide-memoire or even a self-dialogue, to greater and greater cognisance not just of an external reader but of that reader’s agency. As an example, Voltaire sent an annotated book back to the author as critical guidance for preparing a second edition. Put alongside that Emma Koch’s gridding of phrasebooks as linguistic-verbal; linguistic-non-verbal and non-linguistic non-verbal, or Fiona McDonnell’s categorisation of Korean *chekegori*³ into Courtly, Middleclass, and Folk styles. The same approach, with categories of “Format” and “Form”, helped Rachel Franks to make sense of the range of phenomena collectively called True Crime Fiction, and Craig Collins and Sally Bloomfield to lay out the characteristics of the nine surviving copies of the first edition of *The Hermit in Van Diemen’s Land*. The apotheosis of this approach was Nicholas Sparks’s paper on modern bio-science’s contribution to textual stemmatology. In a dense paper that properly required a quiet read with the phone turned to silent he discussed phylogenetic analytical techniques applied to a 10th century West Saxon royal genealogy. Equally demanding was Paul Eggert’s theoretical dissection of the concept of the textual work. He argued that editors, particularly, need to find a place for the reader in the concept of the literary opus, and that in practice editing can find a coherent modality only through concentrating on the “version”.

The second approach was a contextual one. James McCourt’s “The Legal Background to the Publication of Hawkesworth’s *Voyages*” did just what the title promised, and sketched the surprisingly complex changes (or perhaps re-interpretations) in copyright law at the time that accounts of Cook’s voyages were appearing.⁴ In a more centripetal direction, Shef Rogers argued for the centrality of Alexander Pope’s Roman Catholicism in a hostile Protestant age to aspects of his career and personality.

Some of the papers held attention by posing direct questions to the audience. Sue Reynolds presented a US book that had an unexplained provenance and a modified title page and invited her audience to hypothesise the hows and whys of its imprinting and its arrival in Australia. Erika Mordek charted the appearance of repetitive Early Modern printers’ ornaments raising questions about what governed their propagation and spread, then offered her own account of the causes. John Arnold laid out the writing and publication history of Eric Partridge’s war memoir, announced his choice of copy-text for a new edition, and invited the audience to respond.

Ancillary events included a conference dinner at the Kent Hotel in North Carlton. The former was without formalities but a pleasant occasion to catch up with colleagues old and new. Either the hotel’s arithmetic was poor, or the conference’s first day had taken its toll and generated no-shows because an entire table of eight settings languished vacant until it was summarily defrocked by the waitstaff. The following evening, we were hosted by antiquarian bookseller Douglas Stewart at his Armadale premises. There was generous hospitality, some seriously knowledgeable conversation, and many lovely items to inspect. In 2014 in Canberra members of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association brought pop-up bookstalls to the BSANZ conference in a cautious exploration of solidarity. Since then the Society has involved itself in the Melbourne Rare Book Week. We would do well to foster this alliance with the booksellers:

The organising team of Véronique Duché, Hayley Webster, Sue Reynolds, Mary Carroll, Gemma Steele, Bertrand Bourgeois, Anna Welch, Anne Holloway and Daniel Wee are to be congratulated on a very successful and satisfying conference. The venue for 2020 has yet to be confirmed. In 2021 we will be meeting in Auckland.

¹The punsters excelled themselves that year (2006); the conference theme was “Leaving Impressions, Planting Ideas”.

²The concept has been trademarked by UQ as Three Minute Thesis or 3MT[®]. It has been adopted by universities in 65 countries.

³For those who were, or were pretending to be, at the other session, *chekegori* are paper screens painted or embroidered with books and/or curios. Although it was not argued in the paper, this practice of reducing three-dimensional repositories to a single-dimension display clearly foreshadows the twentieth-century arrival of the IKEA flatpack.

⁴This paper included the startling observation that the overly generous advance that was paid by John Strahan for Hawkesworth’s account of Cook’s *Endeavour* voyage was probably double the cost of the ship itself.

Chris Tiffin

Reports from the 2019 AGM

President’s Report

The year leading up to the Melbourne BSANZ/LHF conference in November 2019 has been a very busy one for our Society.

In February we celebrated **50 years of the Society**. The State Library Victoria, the very place where the Society was inaugurated in 1969, hosted a symposium convened by Professor Wallace Kirsop (one of those founding members) and Meredith Sherlock – this event was a collaboration between the Society and Monash University’s Ancora Press. Papers from Prof. Wallace Kirsop, Dr Brian McMullin, Dr Chris Tiffin, Louise Voll Box and Dr Merete Colding Smith, addressed topics ranging from the history of the Society to its future, and current research projects by members.

In July, Dr. Patrick Spedding delivered a fascinating and practical workshop for the 8th annual **Melbourne Rare Book Week** on behalf of the Society. Focusing particularly on hand-press period books from the 18th century, Patrick imparted tips and tricks to set up optimal search techniques when searching for material online.

Four issues of *Script & Print* were released (v. 41.4 and v 42 1-3), thanks to editor Dr Shef Rogers. Please do think about *Script & Print* as a vehicle for your next article. In addition, if you have any recommendations of books for review, titles that will suit the pages of *Script & Print*, please contact Dr Nicholas Sparks, the Book Reviews Editor.

Three issues of *Broadsheet* were also released, thanks to tireless editor Dr Chris Tiffin – excellent conference notes, forthcoming events, anecdotes: you will find everything worth noting for bibliophiles!

New **awards and scholarships** have been created to honour our members – we have exceptional scholars among our members, and this should be known. The Society has introduced the BSANZ Award for Bibliographic Studies, recognising excellence in the field of bibliographic studies; the Wallace Kirsop Conference Bursary, awarded to applicants who are presenting a paper at the annual BSANZ conference; and the Donald Kerr Bursary for Bibliographic Research, designed to support bibliographic research by BSANZ members.

Some changes have been made in our **application form** – we would like to know a little more about our members’ interests so we can make our activities as relevant as possible. Finally, a new software package has been trialled to streamline the work of Secretary and Treasurer and improve the handling of memberships records.

All this would not have been possible without the hard work of the BSANZ committee and BSANZ Council. Vice-President Jo Birks and Treasurer Daniel Wee joined the recently appointed Secretary Dr Anna Welch, and this enthusiastic and dynamic team has put into action a good number of ideas. Our Council has been also very busy responding to requests for advice.

Our media team, in particular Drs Helen Bones (webmaster) and Jocelyn Hargraves (Facebook editor) and Gemma Steele (Twitter editor), have spread the BSANZ word widely.

As you are all aware, BSANZ has partnered with the Australian Library History Forum (ALHF) for the **annual conference for 2019**, hosted at the University of Melbourne (27-30 November), with the theme of ‘Tradition and Innovation: Readers, Books and Libraries.’ A large team has contributed to its success, led by Hayley Webster, Gemma Steele (Melbourne Museum), Mary Carroll, Sue Reynolds (LHF) and myself – with the active contribution of Anna Welch, Daniel Wee, Anne Holloway and Bertrand Bourgeois. We are delighted by the quality of the proposals, and are very much looking forward to the conference.

Looking Ahead

The 2020 Australasian Rare Book Summer School will be held at the State Library of New South Wales from Sunday 2 February to Friday 7 February. There will be three 5-day courses and one 1-day short course. The full courses are *English Bookbindings, 1450–1850: Identification and Interpretation*, taught by David Pearson; *The History of Maps*, taught by Julie Sweetkind-Singer, and *Rare Book Cataloguing* taught by Deborah J. Leslie. The short course is on *Illustration Processes to 1900*, and is taught by Richard Neville. Details can be found on the School’s website at the State Library of NSW. The Society funds a bursary for a student to attend the School.

As to future BSANZ conferences while nothing is set in concrete yet for 2020, Auckland has confirmed its intent to host us in 2021.

Please mention the BSANZ to fellow scholars, librarians, bibliographers, book historians, etc., and encourage them to join.

Please do enjoy the conference, travel safe, and good wishes for the rest of 2019.

Véronique Duché (President)

Treasurer’s Report

Membership

At 4 November 2019, the Society had 168 active and paid individual members. There has been a significant boost in membership over the past financial year. Our renewed and focused engagement on social media this year and the large number of papers received for this year’s conference could be behind this increase. The Committee and Council Members approved the implementation of the online subscription service, Wild Apricot. This investment will improve workflows by automating membership payments and provide members with the capacity to update their details. Automation will reduce the number of human errors and in turn ensure that no individual and institutional subscriptions “slip through the cracks”.

2018-19 Accounts

The Society saw a small decrease in surplus of -\$589.00 AUD for the financial year. This is in part due to a decrease in ticket sales and allocation of bursary funds for the 2018 conference. However, the Society still has a healthy surplus of \$12,881.30 AUD and continues to attract income. Thanks to the vision of the previous Committee, there was also a healthy return of interest received from our term deposits of \$1161.88. The Secretary and Treasurer worked tirelessly at the beginning of the financial year to follow up on outstanding individual and institutional subscriptions. This is evident in our income and expenditure report where we our memberships are only \$90 NZD in arrears. In partnership with the increase in new members this has contributed to a \$2500 increase in membership income.

Although the audit report suggests that the Society's printing costs have stabilised, we will continue to see some irregularities in the 2019-20 financial year. As discussed in Chris Tiffin's 2017-18 Treasurer's report, the journal is running behind and will mean that we will have a number of additional printing bills. This is already evident with a \$14,470 NZD bill for the current financial year.

General Financial Situation

The Society is in an excellent position financially with an increase in individual memberships and stable income streams from publications and copyright royalties. There will be a noticeable decrease in surplus for the 2019-20 financial year with significant printing costs, increase in bursary options and online subscription management costs. However, the Committee felt strongly that profits be fed back into members benefits. This increase in outgoings has been factored into the budget and the Society will continue to have a healthy bank balance.

As suggested in Chris Tiffin's 2017-18 Treasurer's report the Society is heavily reliant on services it receives gratis. It is the hope of the Committee that we can continue to call on the hard work and dedication of our members and stakeholders to offer their support and services to ensure that the Society continues well into the future.

Daniel Wee (Treasurer)

Script and Print Editor's Report

2019 has proceeded much like 2018, with a bit of frustration over chasing one's tail in trying to catch up, only to end up producing the usual four issues in the year. I wrote to almost all of the presenters at last year's conference suggesting ways to develop the talks and urging submission, and that has yielded some good results, such as Rachel Franks's essay on John Rae, and a number of other people are working on revisions to pieces, so there is a small pool of material developing in the 'Under Revision' folder that will, I hope, help increase the flow in 2020.

That said, I continue to enjoy working with authors to develop pieces, and remain very grateful for the timely and insightful reports by all the members of the editorial board. *Script & Print* reviews and publishes articles at least as promptly as any journal in Humanities; it simply needs more submissions. How much the journal is hampered by pressure on scholars to publish in international, top-ranked journals is difficult to assess, though I suspect that has some impact.

Nicholas Sparks has been doing an excellent job as Reviews Editor, generating a steady stream of quality reviews of books relevant to *Script & Print's* readership. We have encountered some resistance from certain publishers about posting print copies of titles to Australasia, but I remain committed to resisting those publishers' preferences. If you have a title you would like to review, please let Nicholas know at bsanz.reviews@gmail.com and he will do his best to arrange a copy for you. And if you are an author and have published a title you would like our readers to know about, please also let Nicholas know and he will see whether he can locate a reviewer.

If anyone has ideas for increasing either the submission rate or speed of evaluation of submissions, I am very open to discussion about those matters. I am also conscious that I have been writing these reports for ten years now, and if anyone wishes to consider taking on the role of editor, or serving as a joint editor for a period, I would be happy to talk to him or her, though any formal appointment process would be managed by the Executive Committee. I am proud of the journal and think it is both attractive and engaging and has put pressure on other bibliographical journals to enhance their own production values. Were the journal to return to production in Australia, costs of both printing and posting will increase, possibly leading to an increase in dues, though probably not by more than \$5-\$10.

The journal would also welcome some updating to the BSANZ webpage of back issues. It has not advanced beyond its original firewall of 2009, and should come up to at least 2016, I believe, but it also requires attention to manage the links, some of which have deteriorated at the same time that the previous designer of the site has become too busy with other matters to maintain it. While it may be possible to pay someone for this work, I do not think the task would be that large, and might afford someone new to the discipline a good opportunity to learn about the range of issues that have preoccupied the Society over the past decades.

I would like to thank my editorial assistant, Megan Kitching, for her sharp eye in proofreading and her excellent attention to areas requiring clarification or references. She has also been responsible this year for managing some of the mailouts on her own while I was overseas on study leave, and has proven herself, yet again, invaluable.

Shef Rogers (Editor)

Occasional Publications Report 2019

Two publications are currently in preparation for publication in BSANZ's Occasional series; one is nearing completion and work on the other will continue in 2020.

One further proposal is anticipated: when it is received, it will be sent to reviewers for consideration.

The Society is always eager to hear from authors who believe their work fits the scope of our publishing program. Please encourage others in your networks to consider BSANZ Occasional Publications for their work.

Brian McMullin (Occasional Publications Editor)

Webmaster and Social Media Sub-committee Reports 2019

In 2019 I made a few changes to the website based on committee members' requests:

- New issues of *Broadsheet* added.
- Updated conference information (now mostly via link to separate conference webpage).
- Resurrected previous conference information which had disappeared, with programmes where available (if anyone has any programme information from the earlier conferences lying around somewhere, I'd be happy to add an electronic copy to the page).
- Announcement of latest *Script and Print* issues added to the news page.

The traffic to the website continues to grow steadily (presumably still due to increased publicity through the social media channels). In 2018 the website attracted 6,144 visitors in total, whereas so far 7,844 people have visited the website this year, with over two months still to go.

There has been an issue with the plugin responsible for organising the back issues of *Script & Print* which is as yet unfixed. Shef has been waiting for David Large to look into the problem and advise whether it's fixable or necessary to find a new plugin.

No other problems to report with webhost, platform or domain registration.

I'm happy to post notices on our news page for anything related to BSANZ activities, including but not limited to: conference CFPs, upcoming book launches or celebrations of research publications, requests for research assistance, etc. Please email h.bones@westernsydney.edu.au with any such material for the site.

Helen Bones (Webmaster)

Presently, the Facebook site has 69 followers and 60 'likes'. This a little more than double the number this time last year—36 followers and 31 'likes'—which is a fantastic result. In recent months, the most popular posts related to advertising the third issue of volume 42 of *Script & Print* (post 31 October, 'reaching' 50 people), the fellowships and awards being offered by the Bibliographical Society of Canada (posted on 5 September, reaching 48 people), and the latest issue of the Society's 'Broadsheet' (posted on 21 August, reaching 39 people). Posts regarding this year's national conference attract consistent engagement, reaching 30–35 people.

I attribute this result to our regular posts to create and maintain interest, informing members of not only the Society's national conference and new issues of the 'Broadsheet' and *Script & Print*, but also relevant calls for papers for national and international conferences, interesting news items, communication of relevant fellowships and awards and so on.

Further engagement might involve, for example, posting calls for book reviewers and/or themed issues for *Script & Print*, and inviting members to contribute posts, such as of research progress and book publications and their launches.

Jocelyn Hargrave (Facebook)

As of 15 October 2019, the BSANZ Twitter account (@BibSocANZ) has just short of 500 followers: an increase of 330% in the past six months. Around half of these followers are located in Australia or New Zealand. Tweets sent from the account have an average of 17,000 impressions per month. The account has proved useful for promoting events, boosting the profile of the society, and engaging with our current members, and prospective members, as well as other societies and institutions.

Gemma Steele (Twitter)

Society Officers for 2020

President: Prof Véronique Duché

Vice-President Dr Anna Welch

Secretary: Dr Jocelyn Hargrave

Treasurer: Daniel Wee

Council: Dr Gillian Dooley, Simon Farley, Dr Donald Kerr, Lars Kremers, Dr Amanda Laugesen, Andrew Parsons, Dr Nicholas Sparks, Anthony Tedeschi, 1 Vacancy (Victoria)

Editors: Dr Shef Rogers (*Script & Print*), Dr Brian McMullin (Occasional Publications), Hayley Webster (*Broadsheet*)

Webmaster: Dr Helen Bones

Media Sub Committee: Dr Jocelyn Hargrave (Facebook), Gemma Steele (Twitter),

Australasian Summer Rare Book School

<https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/research-and-collections/research-and-engagement/australasian-rare-book-summer-school>.

The crucial dates are:

Applications are now closed

Tuition fees due: Mon 13 January

Start of School: 3 February 2020

London Bound

BSANZ Vice President Dr Anna Welch (State Library Victoria) has been awarded the Harold Wright Scholarship and the Sarah and William Holmes Scholarship for 2019. This represents a life-changing opportunity for Anna to develop as a curator of printed collections and as a historian by spending several months in the Prints and Drawings Collection of the British Museum in 2020.

Harold James Lean Wright (1885–1961) was a scholarly print dealer, collector and philanthropist. Working for P&D Colnaghi in Bond Street, London, he advised many of the major Australian and New Zealand public institutions and private collectors on acquisitions of fine art prints. From the 1950s he donated to the Baillieu Library (University of Melbourne) around 3,700 Old Master prints (many of which featured in an exhibition at the Baillieu until 8 December 2019, *Horizon Lines*, curated by scholarship alumna Kerriane Stone), as well some 15,000 rare books relating to the history of printing.

Harold's widow Isobel established the Harold Wright Scholarship and the Sarah & William Holmes Scholarship (named in honour of her parents) for graduates of Australian and New Zealand universities to study the great print collection of the British Museum. The 50th anniversary of these scholarships was celebrated by a symposium at the University of Melbourne (*Prints, Printmaking and Philanthropy*, 30 September–2 October 2019) and a publication, *Horizon*

Lines: Marking 50 Years of Print Scholarship, edited by Kerriane Stone.

Anna says, "The opportunity to immerse oneself in the practice of looking is rare, and even rarer to be able to do so in a collection that facilitates both the deep study of specific artists, subjects and iconographies, and the observation of a medium (print) developing and evolving geographically and temporally. Spending time in one of the world's greatest print collections will equip me with new knowledge and an improved aesthetic sensibility that will greatly enhance my work in the State Library's collections. I am thrilled and grateful, and especially honoured to join the esteemed group of Wright and Holmes alumni in the 50th year of these joint scholarships."

While in Britain, Anna will also take up a role as Curatorial Fellow in the Renaissance Seminar at Birkbeck College, London, having been invited by the recent Emmerson Fellow at State Library Victoria, Professor Sue Wiseman.

World of the Book

Explore a wealth of ideas and imagination in *World of the Book*, a one-of-a-kind free exhibition at State Library Victoria, showcasing the history of book design, production and illustration from the Middle Ages to today.

See rare medieval manuscripts and sacred texts, magnificent natural history and botanical illustration, and stunning modern artist books and fine press editions. Discover pioneering Australian classics, children's books, graphic novels and comics, and cutting-edge graphic design.

World of the book celebrates the unique place books have in our hearts and minds.

www.slv.vic.gov.au/world-of-the-book

From next issue (No. 112) the *Broadsheet* will be edited by Hayley Webster of Museums Victoria

If you have material you feel is suitable for inclusion, please send it to her at hwebster@museum.vic.gov.au