

# Forty Years On: The Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand and its Journal<sup>1</sup>

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Surveying the foundation and early history of the Bibliographical Society of America (“BSA”)<sup>2</sup> and its journal, *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* (“PBSA”), has, perhaps inevitably, led me to wonder whether our own Society has followed a similar path. Despite its much briefer history, its infinitely more slender resources, and its comparatively limited achievements, has the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand (“the Society”) exhibited the same pattern of development? In particular, has the development of *The Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin* (“the Bulletin”), re-titled with volume 29 (2005) *Script & Print* (“S&P”),<sup>3</sup> paralleled that of PBSA?

The pre-history of the Society is a topic about which I have no personal knowledge, and I have found no published account on which to draw. All I can say is that I believe that Bill Cameron, probably during one of his whirlwind visits to Australia from New Zealand in the early 1960s, floated the idea of forming a local bibliographical society. There is apparently no equivalent of A. W. Pollard’s “Our Twenty-first Birthday,” reflecting on the founders and early history of The Bibliographical Society [of the United Kingdom] (“BS”),<sup>4</sup> or of Carl B. Roden’s “Historical Sketch,” published in the fourteenth year of BSA. The latter opens with these words: “The purpose of this note is to preserve a record of the growth of the sentiment in favor of a national body, and of the successive steps taken to bring about its creation.”<sup>5</sup> As far as our own Society is concerned the history of the period of gestation must remain for the present an oral one awaiting its recorder. Of necessity, therefore, my comments start with the foundation of the Society.

The Society was established in Melbourne in February 1969, and it may be said to have been “fortunate” in being founded sufficiently late in bibliographical history that bibliography as a scholarly activity, specifically as practised in the English-speaking world, had by then well and truly adopted the “new-style-analytical”

<sup>1</sup> A revised version of a brief paper given at the annual general meeting of the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand, University of Queensland, 22 July 2009.

<sup>2</sup> “PBSA Turns One Hundred,” *Script & Print* 32 (2008 [published August 2009]), 219–32.

<sup>3</sup> Non-specific references in the text are designated “the journal”; references to the *Bulletin* in the footnotes are in the form “BSANZB.”

<sup>4</sup> *Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* 13 (1913–1915), 9–27.

<sup>5</sup> PBSA 11 (1917), 19–23 (p. 19). There were to be two further histories: Henry Van Hoesen, “The Bibliographical Society of America—Its Leaders and Activities, 1904–1939,” PBSA 35 (1941), 177–202; and J. M. Edelstein, “The Bibliographical Society of America, 1904–1979,” PBSA 73 (1979), 389–422. The centennial history by Hope Mayo is yet to appear.

approach, a phase that I considered BSA, as evidenced by its journal, to have entered only after an existence of forty years, in the period immediately following World War II. Our Society was established at a time when local historians of print must have been fairly well agreed on what constituted bibliography: it was what the likes of Foxon and Fleeman, Bowers and Todd, Maslen and McKenzie wrote about. Hence it could confidently be claimed that the *Bulletin* started with a particular advantage, that it escaped the lengthy “old-style-descriptive” infancy and adolescence experienced by *PBSA*.

The fact of being founded in 1969 is reflected in the public statements of the new Society. It explicitly took as its model the two senior bibliographical societies, BS and BSA, as well as their journals, *The Library* (and its amalgamate, *The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*) and *PBSA* respectively. The promotional flyer announcing the creation of the Society (undated but presumably early 1969) acknowledges this indebtedness and defines its scope in these terms:

Modelled on The Bibliographical Society (London) and on the Bibliographical Society of America the new Society has as its province all the studies that form part of or are related to physical bibliography: the history of printing, publishing, bookselling, typefounding, papermaking, bookbinding; palaeography and codicology; textual bibliography. On the other hand it has no more than a marginal interest in the general field of reference bibliography, documentation and information retrieval, although it hopes to stimulate the compilation of short-title catalogues of early English and European imprints held in Australian and New Zealand libraries. No countries or periods are excluded from its preoccupations, which will range from Italian and German incunabula to XIXth and XXth century Australian publishers. In all these areas it seeks to encourage scholarly enquiry and thereby to improve the quality of the bibliographical work being done in the two countries.<sup>6</sup>

This outline of the Society’s “province” was supplemented by a statement appearing in the first number of the *Bulletin*:

The Bulletin will contain information of interest to members, lists of bibliographical work done in Australia and New Zealand or on Antipodean subjects, reports on research in progress, and notes (or short articles) and queries relevant to the fields (physical and textual, book-trade and printing history) studied by the Society. It is also hoped to have brief notices of interesting acquisitions (*incunabula*, medieval MSS, etc.) by Australian and New Zealand libraries.

Article II of the Constitution expresses the object of the Society as “to promote research in bibliography and to issue bibliographical publications”—a wording that again indicates its descent (though, truth to tell, what else would a bibliographical

<sup>6</sup> *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand* [4pp.], 2.

society have as its object?). The Constitution itself is non-committal as to what constitutes “bibliography”—perhaps intentionally—but I imagine that the statement of scope included in the promotional flyer was sufficient initially to stake out the Society’s territory. Statements of scope have continued to appear in issues of the journal, though they have not in fact protected the Society against challenges from proponents of forms of bibliography other than the physical who have found the statements too limited (and limiting).

The Society clearly comprehends both Australia and New Zealand, but Australia, at least in terms of membership numbers, has always been the dominant partner—this despite the much stronger tradition of bibliographical teaching and scholarship in New Zealand, where courses in “Methods and Techniques of Scholarship”<sup>7</sup> were by 1969 well established in the universities—Victoria University College in Wellington had had such a course since 1949. And I think it can fairly be said that by 1969 New Zealand had become noted for its distinguished crop of bibliographers and textual scholars. The strength of the New Zealand tradition is also reflected in the creation of bibliographical presses, with Auckland leading the way in 1958.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand I can say little about bibliographical offerings in Australian universities beyond observing that by the late 1970s at least some were offering courses of the “methods and techniques” kind; for example, at Monash, Harold Love offered a fourth-year English course “Aims and Methods of Literary Research” until his retirement in 2002, at which point teaching in that area was abandoned. This may well represent a pattern: that as teachers of bibliography have retired they have not been replaced and their courses have been discontinued.

As far as librarians were concerned—and here I discount “history of the book” survey courses in departments of librarianship—the only formal source of education in bibliography in Australia for most of them remained until 1980 the external examinations of the Library Association of Australia (“LAA”). It is difficult to imagine how students prepared for the optional Paper 405, “Historical and Descriptive Bibliography,” which was overwhelmingly oriented towards historical aspects: the questions were demanding and the failure rate high—in 1974, for example, twenty-six of the fifty-four candidates (48 per cent) failed.<sup>9</sup> Also at Monash, from 1976 to 1997, an optional paper “Bibliography and Textual Scholarship” was offered to M.Lib. candidates and, from 1981, to second-year

<sup>7</sup> Certainly in Auckland, and perhaps elsewhere in the colleges, the course comprehended bibliography and palaeography.

<sup>8</sup> To be followed in 1961–63 by Queensland, Otago, Victoria and Sydney—see B. J. McMullin, “Bibliographical Presses in Australia and New Zealand,” *BSANZB* no. 11 (November 1977), 55–64. A new survey is being undertaken by Dr. Per Henningsgaard.

<sup>9</sup> 1974 appears to be the last year in which results of the Association’s examinations were published in *The Australian Library Journal*.

M.A. students in the Graduate School of Librarianship, as well as, in a modified form, as a required course—along with required courses in textual studies and book-trade history—in an interdepartmental M.A. in Bibliographical and Textual Studies. However, with the move of Librarianship into the Faculty of Information Technology these courses too were abandoned. In the mid-1990s offerings in bibliography were also available in at least Canberra and Brisbane—witness the panel discussion at the annual conference of the Society in November 1995<sup>10</sup>—but what other courses were available and to what extent they have survived I have not determined. Likewise, I remain to be brought up to date on the recent history and present standing of the teaching of bibliography in New Zealand. The current extent of instruction in bibliography/book history is clearly an area deserving investigation, by another hand.

Particularly in its early years—like both BS and BSA—the Society has had a close attachment to the library profession, to the extent of occasionally holding meetings during conferences of LAA.<sup>11</sup> A tentative categorisation of members based on published lists of 1977 and 1982<sup>12</sup> suggests that in its early years it comprised a majority of librarians (and possibly still does), which is perhaps not really a matter of surprise. That said, however, it has to be observed that, by and large, that majority has not been proportionately represented in the Society's publications, a reflection, no doubt, of the absence of a required component of bibliography, book history, or similar topics in the formal preparation of most professional librarians but also, I suppose, that librarians have not been subject to the pressure to publish experienced by academics.

Nonetheless the Society has been able to maintain a creditable programme of conferences and publications, though one not without its hiccups, particularly experienced at various times in maintaining prompt publication of the journal—indeed the major achievement of recent years has been to get it back onto a regular quarterly schedule. Conferences have always been a feature of the Society's activity, starting with that held in Melbourne in August 1970, when an AGM

<sup>10</sup> See "The Future(s) of Teaching Analytical Bibliography: A Panel Discussion," *BSANZB*, 20 (1996), 203–23 [Paul Eggert, "Introduction," 203–04; Paul Eggert, "Teaching Bibliography at ADFA: An Apologia," 205–12; Bryan Coleborne, "Course Design and Analytical Bibliography," 213–17; B. J. McMullin, "Bibliography in the Library School at Monash," 218–20; Chris Tiffin, "Physical Bibliography in the Digital Age," 221–23].

<sup>11</sup> The last meeting held in association with LAA was apparently that held in Hobart in August 1977 during the 19th biennial conference. The proceedings were published by the Conference Committee as *Libraries in Society* (Hobart, 1977 [i.e. November 1978]). In October 1990 the Society sought to take advantage of the presence of librarians in Perth (at the 1st biennial conference of The Australian Library and Information Association, the successor body to LAA) by holding its annual conference immediately following, but to little effect.

<sup>12</sup> One list is included in *BSANZB* no. 10 (3:1), May 1977, 34–35; the other comprises no. 20 of the Society's irregular newsletter, the *Broadsheet*, January 1982. No membership list has been published since.

and three papers of up to an hour (plus time for questions and discussion) were considered to make up “a full day’s programme.” A measure of increasing activity within the Society has been the expansion of conferences, held in either country and not necessarily in conjunction with an AGM; they now typically occupy two full days, with papers being limited to twenty minutes (including questions and discussion), even being delivered in parallel sessions, perhaps an indication of the Society’s well-being but to my mind an undesirable development.<sup>13</sup>

The dominance of Australia within the Society has also for lengthy periods been reflected in the authorship of articles published in the journal. No doubt there are as many reasons as there are scholars why New Zealanders have not been particularly well represented as contributors to general issues.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps the periods of under-representation are to be accounted for not simply by a lack of numbers but by the particular interests of active researchers in New Zealand. My impression is that, apart from the history of the local book trade, they have concentrated on Anglo-American subjects, predominantly of a literary or trade-history nature, with the physical and textual condition of their own literature a minor concern. Consequently, I surmise, they have regarded it as more appropriate to publish in the United Kingdom or the United States.<sup>15</sup> It surely cannot be that they have thought of the journal as being concerned with antipodean subjects only. In this context I might observe that Don McKenzie, who wrote predominantly, though not exclusively, on British topics, is represented in the *Bulletin* by a single note.<sup>16</sup> By comparison Australian scholars have been happy (or at least willing) to offer material on Anglo subjects for publication. I note, for example, Harold Love’s articles on Restoration and early-eighteenth-century authors—Southerne, Rochester, Flecknoe—that might well have found a home in a northern-hemisphere journal.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> In recent years there have also been conferences held in conjunction with SHARP [Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing], the papers from which have been published as issues of the *Bulletin* or *S&P*: (1) *Books & Empire: Textual Production, Distribution and Consumption in Colonial and Postcolonial Countries* [= *BSANZB* 28:1–2 (2004)], and (2) *Paradise: New Worlds of Books & Readers* [= *S&P* 29:1–4 (2005)].

<sup>14</sup> By “general issues” I mean to exclude themed or conference-derived issues such as the two listed in fn. 13.

<sup>15</sup> It might be observed here that there are more members of the Society in the United States of America than in New Zealand, an observation that is initially surprising but perhaps to be explained simply by virtue of the disparity in population numbers.

<sup>16</sup> D. F. McKenzie, “*The History of Our National Debts and Taxes (1751–53); Adam Smith’s Copy*,” *BSANZB* no. 17 (November 1980), 289–90. McKenzie was also a contributor to H. H. R. Love, “Report of the BSANZ Subcommittee on Standards for the Editing of Australian and New Zealand Literature,” *BSANZB* 8 (1984), 1–21. The Society devoted a double issue of *BSANZB* to his memory: *Printers and Readers* (= *BSANZB* 25:1–2 (2001)).

<sup>17</sup> For example, “The Texts of Southerne’s *The Spartan Dame*,” *BSANZB* no. 3 (October 1971), 54–59; “The Text of [Rochester’s] ‘Timon. A Satyr’,” *BSANZB* 6 (1982), 113–40; “Richard Flecknoe

The statements of scope contained in the announcement of 1969 and the first number of the *Bulletin* did not, however, prevent the new Society experiencing the same uncertainty (if that is indeed an accurate diagnosis) that BSA had experienced in its early years: whether enumerative bibliography was within scope or not. This uncertainty was perhaps encouraged by the admission of “a *marginal* interest” in reference bibliography, as well as by the publication in the *Bulletin* in August 1976 of D. H. Borchardt’s “A Short Note on Some Recent Australian Bibliographies,”<sup>18</sup> in effect a supplement to the third edition of his *Australian Bibliography*.<sup>19</sup> One consequence of the appointment of a new editor of the *Bulletin* in 1977 was to henceforth exclude enumerative/subject bibliography from its pages, though his hitherto-unspoken rationale was not made explicit until April 1981, in *Broadsheet* no. 17, at the point that the bi-annual had metamorphosed into a quarterly:

The over-riding reason for going quarterly is of course to attempt to establish the *Bulletin* as a general bibliographical journal open to contributors throughout the world and receptive to articles and notes on topics in any area of physical bibliography. We will always retain, however, a particular responsibility for matters antipodean.<sup>20</sup>

In this context it might be observed that the editor of the day has always had a virtually free hand, even to the extent of being invited to independently revise the statement of scope, though it has to be said that the revisions have probably reflected a change already manifest in the publication itself. This freedom is perhaps the nature of a purely voluntary society with a limited membership and with only a small number of members in a position to take on time-consuming responsibilities. In this context it might also be observed that in the early days much of the material published had been solicited, by the editor direct or via a handful of members who were committed to seeing the Society, and its publications, flourish.

After 1976, in inviting contributions “in any area of physical bibliography,” the editor believed that he was fulfilling the intentions of the founding fathers (a) in being receptive to contributions on matters bibliographical not limited by geography and certainly not excluding the antipodean, and (b) in not being hospitable to enumerative bibliography—that is, to subject bibliography where the subject itself lacks any content that could be seen to fall within the Society’s purview. Nonetheless, Sandra Burt’s note on the Society’s archives reveals that

as Author–Publisher,” *BSANZB* 14 (1990), 41–50.

<sup>18</sup> *BSANZB* 9 (1975), 17–25.

<sup>19</sup> *Australian Bibliography: A Descriptive Guide to Reference Works* (Rushcutters Bay, NSW: Pergamon, 1976).

<sup>20</sup> Actually it had initially been an irregular, having achieved nine numbers in the period March 1970 to August 1976.

there was a certain unease among members whose interests did not necessarily coincide with one or both of these aims. She reports that

In 1978 Borchardt was complaining at the heavily international focus of the *Bulletin* and confessing he had lost his enthusiasm. The archive reflects differing, even opposing views, on the administration of the Society, not to mention the subjects it represents. Borchardt was probably not alone in feeling that the Society's international focus had diverted attention from antipodean interests.<sup>21</sup>

I accept that Borchardt had lost his enthusiasm, but not, I suggest, for the reason stated: the notion that “the Society's international focus had diverted attention from antipodean interests” does not—on the evidence of what had been published in the *Bulletin* up to the critical year 1978—bear examination. Taking as a unit the thirteen issues published by the end of that year, it seems to me that from the outset there had been a “reasonable” mixture; certainly no. 12 (May 1978) was “heavily international,” but then no. 13 (November 1978) was equally heavily Australian. About all that can be said of the intervening thirty years is that individual issues have perhaps been preponderantly either international or antipodean in content—but not, however, as a matter of policy.

Whatever the resulting mix, the fact of the matter is that editors are ultimately dependent on what is offered them for publication: if there has been a paucity of antipodean material in the *Bulletin* at any particular time it has been because little such material was being submitted for consideration: my understanding is that what has been, and continues to be, published in the journal fairly represents what has been submitted for editorial consideration.

That Borchardt was not alone in his misgivings is in fact quite clear: there was a continuing concern, which culminated in late 1989, when a “working party on Australian subject bibliography” was set up, its members all being also members of the Society, though not representing it. Among its “possible roles and functions” were the maintenance of a register of bibliographies in progress and the production of an annual list of bibliographies compiled, presumably emulating the New Zealand annual list, *Bibliographical Work in New Zealand: Work in Progress and Work Published*.<sup>22</sup> The advocates of enumerative bibliography also proposed seeking the formation of a special interest group within the Society,<sup>23</sup> but opposition was sufficiently strong that the proposal was not accepted. Nevertheless, in response to a proposal that it lend its name to a series of bibliographies (specific titles apparently nowhere recorded), the Executive of the Society went so far as to comment—somewhat illogically, it seems to me—along these lines:

<sup>21</sup> “A Note on the BSANZ Archive,” *S&P* 30 (2006), 39–41 (p. 39).

<sup>22</sup> Beginning in 1980, published by the University of Waikato Library, Hamilton.

<sup>23</sup> See *Broadsheet* 43 (November 1989).

The Executive was of the opinion that it could only be to the good of the BSANZ if the interest of some members of the Society in enumerative bibliography was recognised as one of the Society's concerns and given encouragement. This is the third or fourth time on which such recognition has been sought. Any Society must respond to the needs of its members, and must be prepared to change over a period of time.<sup>24</sup>

The existence of the irregular *Australian Reference Bibliography* may well have served to “defuse” the situation; certainly since the early 1990s the acceptance of enumerative bibliography has seemingly ceased to be an issue. This is not to say that the Society has not after all responded to the needs of its members. One might even say that in the past two decades or so the proponents of physical bibliography (as defined in the original promotional flyer) have had difficulty in having their voice heard—or is it that physical bibliography is not being much practised these days?<sup>25</sup> If what is being published in the journal is what is being studied by members they are now more concerned with literary history and the protean “book history.” What has been more contentious in recent years is the term “bibliography” itself (and admittedly the connotations of “bulletin”)—witness the debate leading to the change of title to *Script & Print*.<sup>26</sup> For the true believers (or, if you will, “reactionaries”) the shift of emphasis will have been unwelcome, even if it does represent a world-wide phenomenon. One of the true believers would suggest that there is a need to beat the drum for historical bibliography, on the grounds that it is a necessary basis for whatever variety of bibliography is to be pursued.

Not only has the journal had an Australian emphasis: within Australia it has had a Melbourne emphasis, and within Melbourne a Monash University emphasis, in

<sup>24</sup> See *Broadsheet* 50 (April 1993).

<sup>25</sup> Certainly two of the three institutions represented by the four lecturers who took part in the panel discussion during the 1995 meeting of the Society (see fn. 10) no longer offer courses in bibliography. That the decline in the teaching of physical bibliography is not confined to Australia and New Zealand is confirmed by Mirjam M. Foot, “Historical Bibliography for Rare-Book Librarians,” in Ann R. Hawkins, ed., *Teaching Bibliography, Textual Criticism, and Book History* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006), 25–31: she reports that “the provision for teaching bibliography in all its aspects, or for teaching the history of the book in Great Britain, is too slight, particularly for future rare book librarians.” She does allow that “Some descriptive, analytical and textual bibliography is taught [presumably in departments of literature] (but on the whole not to future librarians),” so that “much of what is needed to acquire, catalogue, preserve and give access to rare book collections, has to be learnt on the job.” (25) The Hawkins volume contains a further twenty-two contributions (all but two by authors based in North America), in which the authors relate their strategies in teaching particular programmes, a number of them bibliographical only by courtesy.

<sup>26</sup> Some indication of the progress of the protracted debate can be garnered from issues of the *Broadsheet* going back to at least no. 64 (October 2001). The final stimulus to change was the paper by Dr. Sydney Shep, submitted in March 2003, which proposed various ways of “improving the publishing activities of the Society.”



that Monash has supplied several of the editors (among them two of its graduates) and has been the institutional home of what might be seen as a disproportionate number of its authors. The initial preponderance of contributors from the city of Melbourne/Monash University is comparable with the preponderance of University of Virginia contributors to the first volume of *Studies in Bibliography*, if the comparison may be allowed. On his translation to Sydney the then editor, conscious of the perception of a Melbourne bias, had this to say:

Few Sydney-based bibliographers or bibliophiles would deny that Melbourne has traditionally been the centre of bibliographical studies in Australia (we do not say Australasia), or that this has especially been the case during the past two decades with the ascendancy of what is known, even in England now, as the 'Monash School' ... It was natural that Melbourne should be the birthplace of this Society and of its journal.

He went on to add:

There is another point to be made about what has been seen as the Melbourne orientation of the *BSANZ Bulletin* in recent years. The notion of a local 'clique' consciously monopolising an on-the-doorstep bibliographical journal as a vehicle for their research is not valid. Rather, a number of energetic Melbourne contributors ... have worked hard to support a journal which at times, *including the present time*, has been seriously starved of material from elsewhere.<sup>27</sup>

This last is an observation worth emphasising. Indeed, the presence of so many articles written by editors results from their recognition that, at times, if an issue is to appear at all they will have to go it virtually alone, supported perhaps by others with offices in the same building who can be leant on. The history of the journal may even be characterised as one of famine interrupted by the occasional bumper harvest, a situation which certainly cannot be said of the major journals in the field, where the period between acceptance and publication may be as much as two years. One aspect of famine is that, notwithstanding their increasing number, very few conference papers get worked up into publishable articles for general issues. Another may well be that there is a lack of confidence on the part of younger scholars in exposing their work to external judgment. On both scores my experience has been that editors have always been anxious to encourage such potential contributors by providing advice (themselves or from referees), where wanted, on how to shape their work for publication.

In times of bumper harvest it is tempting to suggest allowing *S&P* to expand beyond its 256 pages a year, and certainly it would be gratifying to see our journal matching its seniors in bulk—but not in bulk alone, of course. Desirable though expansion would seem, I'm reminded (a) that bumper harvests are likely to be

<sup>27</sup> *BSANZB* 9 (1985), 93.

followed by famine of an indeterminate duration, leading to a shortage of copy, and (b) that the Society's financial position has never been sufficiently robust to make a commitment to expansion anything other than risky in financial terms.

In essence, the Society is at present in a bind, and I do not claim to have the key to getting out of it. Even assuming an adequate supply of copy, expansion would presuppose an increased income, which in effect means an increased membership (and not just readership).<sup>28</sup> I doubt that we would have any success in following the example of BS, faced with the same difficulty in January 1894, when membership stood at 184. The executive announced that on a certain day the roll would be closed and new members elected only when vacancies occurred; within a year the roll was filled at 300, and it had always been full up to the time of Pollard's writing—such was the attraction of exclusivity.<sup>29</sup> Circumstances are rather different in 2011. Twenty or thirty years ago the Society had over 400 members; today the figure is 188,<sup>30</sup> but this figure has been fairly static for some years, with new memberships being offset by resignations. Hence, even to maintain current activities we have to set the membership rate at a relatively high figure, such that, given the present (early 2011) exchange rate, it is now cheaper, for example, to belong to BS than to our Society, though presumably that will not always be the case. Whatever our membership travails, we are in good company. Among the other regional/local/parochial bibliographical societies membership numbers are also lower than one might have expected: for example, the Oxford Bibliographical Society (founded in 1922) has 428 members<sup>31</sup> and the Cambridge Bibliographical Society (founded in 1947) has 241.<sup>32</sup> Even the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia (founded in 1947), publisher of *Studies in Bibliography*, appears to have only about 400.<sup>33</sup> And I might note, as an aside, that BS membership is now 795,<sup>34</sup> down from a 1980s peak of 1196.<sup>35</sup>

Despite being confined to Canadian topics in its *Papers/Cahiers*, The Bibliographical Society of Canada (founded 1963) would seem to be a comparable body to our own. It too has limited financial resources, and it too in recent

<sup>28</sup>To varying extents other bibliographical societies have had the benefit of bequests in supplementing income from memberships, but such examples of philanthropy appear to be alien to Australians and New Zealanders.

<sup>29</sup>Pollard, "Our Twenty-first Birthday," 17.

<sup>30</sup>Figure provided by Pamela E. Pryde, Treasurer, Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand.

<sup>31</sup>Annual Report for 2009.

<sup>32</sup>Figure provided by Nicholas Smith, Secretary, Cambridge Bibliographical Society.

<sup>33</sup>Based on a count of members for 2003–2004 listed in the back matter of *Studies in Bibliography* 56 (2005–2006 [published 2008]), 391.

<sup>34</sup>Annual Report 2009–2010.

<sup>35</sup>Annual Report 1981–1982.

years has gone through the same soul-searching. The then President's words in December 2007 sound very familiar:

Among the issues that have dominated our recent discussions include the future shape of the Society's publications, particularly in the digital age; the state of the Society's finances; and the marketing and promotion of the Society, to insure that we continue to remain relevant, attracting more individual members, and sustaining our institutional memberships.<sup>36</sup>

In other words our predicament is shared publicly by at least one other bibliographical society. How successful the Canadian society has been in boosting its stocks and its image I have not attempted to determine, but I am struck by the reference to "the digital age": I suspect that the availability of an etext of a particular journal is likely to reduce, rather than increase, the prospect of recruiting more members for the sponsoring body and its journal.

One obvious observation that may be made in relation to the journal is that in general issues there have been few articles written by authors from outside the region, a situation that reflects what may be characterised as a lack of visibility. That is, bibliographers/book historians seeking publication either (a) do not know of the journal's existence or (b) do not see it as a suitable vehicle for their work. It is perhaps too early to judge whether the change of title from *Bulletin* to *Script & Print* has achieved the anticipated reversal of (b), but I note that in the most recent volume (34 (2010)) there are only two (out of eleven) outside authors.<sup>37</sup> Those authors from outside the region who *have* published in the journal are likely to be ones who have been visitors to these parts, such as G. E. Bentley jr., or who have been invited to contribute. The lack of visibility is encapsulated by Joseph Rudman (also a visitor) in his *S&P* "riposte"<sup>38</sup> to articles by John Burrows<sup>39</sup> and Anthony Hassall:<sup>40</sup> none of the twenty literary scholars he surveyed had heard of the two articles in question, and of another group of eight "published practitioners" none knew of the articles or even the journal itself. Apart from the odd honourable exception, we appear to be talking to ourselves. Again, I do not have an answer. Recruiting new members for any journal with scholarly claims is, I am sure, difficult these days.

<sup>36</sup> "A Message from David McKnight, President of the BSC," *The Bulletin* [of The Bibliographical Society of Canada] new ser. no. 69 (December 2007), 3.

<sup>37</sup> I exclude notes, obituaries and reviews.

<sup>38</sup> "Sarah and Henry Fielding and the Authorship of *The History of Ophelia: A Riposte*," *S&P* 31 (2007), 147–63.

<sup>39</sup> "Sarah and Henry Fielding and the Authorship of *The History of Ophelia: A Computational Analysis*," *S&P* 30 (2006), 71–92.

<sup>40</sup> "Sarah and Henry Fielding and the Authorship of *The History of Ophelia: Literary Considerations*," *S&P* 30 (2006), 93–103.

Finally, how successful has the Society been in meeting its original aims? Physical bibliography has always been represented, but in recent years it has been largely overshadowed by literary history and book history. Of the areas specified in the flyer, typefounding and palaeography have not generated any articles, while others have had no more than the occasional piece. The Society has certainly been successful in stimulating the compilation of short-title catalogues of early imprints held in local libraries, though the catalogue records have been absorbed into the national union catalogues and the *English Short Title Catalogue* rather than, with a couple of exceptions (Wellington area on paper, Queensland on microfiche), being separately published. Incunabula, apart from A. J. Dunston's early article,<sup>41</sup> have received little attention, though moves are afoot to produce a new census of the six hundred or so eligible items to replace Kaplan's list.<sup>42</sup> The Society has established a commendable publications record, though one might have wished for a more active programme of occasional publications. And conferences have flourished, even if they have not generated a significant number of new members—might the Society resume the practice of rewarding speakers with a year's membership, in the hope that they will renew? Above all, that the Society has survived is in itself no mean achievement.

<sup>41</sup> "An Annotated Martial (Hain 10812) in the Library of New South Wales—and Still Further Remarks on the Cataloguing of *Incunabula*," *BSANZB*, no. 2 (March 1971), 16–30.

<sup>42</sup> H. G. Kaplan, *A First Census of Incunabula in Australian and New Zealand* (Sydney: Public Library of New South Wales, 1966).

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