Studies in the History of Bookbinding is certainly the most up-to-date work on the subject available today. Covering the production of many countries and periods, the text is general enough to be useful to most librarians, collectors, dealers, and scholars of the book. Although precise, technical and heavily footnoted, Foot’s prose is neither boring nor pedantic and is often sprinkled with lighter remarks such as ‘The history of English decorated bookbinding starts with a bang’ (p. 96).

In her introduction, the author states ‘There is no greater conversation killer than an admission to an overriding interest in the history of bookbinding’ (p. 1). Anyone reading this book would certainly welcome the opportunity of having a long conversation with Mirjam Foot.

MICHEL BRISEBOIS
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Essentially, this is a collector’s guide (hence the title) and not a proper bibliography. It is, however, quite useful as such, and anyone interested in collecting first editions of classic mystery writers should have a copy. A revision of the first edition of 1988, this new edition includes seventy-seven additional authors, mostly writers who have come into prominence since the initial publication. The scope of this new edition has also broadened. While the first edition stuck closely to the typical ‘English Body-in-the-Library’ detective story, this edition includes some of the more prominent writers of the American school of hard-boiled fiction, authors such as Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. As well, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is represented here for the first time, an appearance sadly lacking from the earlier book.

This is really the first book of its kind. Several checklists of crime fiction exist, the most important being Allen J. Hubin’s Crime Fiction, 1749–1980: A Comprehensive Bibliography, plus supplements (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1984, and later), but nothing with the slant of being a guidebook for collectors has been attempted before. The first edition was quite handy, and this edition is much improved.

The book is laid out as an easy guide to collecting, geared toward the novice. Introductory chapters include ‘Approaches to Collecting,’ a basic ‘what is it and why do I want it’ chapter; ‘Forming a Collection,’ an overview of where first editions of detective fiction can be purchased (suggestions include antique markets, auctions, church sales and yes, of course, dealers’ catalogues), and what a collector should focus on (first editions in dust wrappers preferred, please!). ‘Maintaining a Collection’ is a simple instructional on how not to ruin valuable books,
and 'Secondary Activities' has suggestions about joining author fan clubs (such as the Sherlockian societies) and attending mystery conventions such as the Bouchercon, the World Mystery convention named after author and editor Anthony Boucher.

The bulk of the book lies in the individual author entries. 144 writers are included. Many top names in the field are present, including Nicholas Blake [a pseudonym of Cecil Day Lewis], Agatha Christie, Freeman Wills Crofts, R. Austin Freeman, Ngaio Marsh, Ellery Queen, Dorothy Sayers, and Robert Van Gulik. A sample entry gives the author's name, dates of birth and death, a general chatty description of the books (including descriptions of bindings), and a checklist divided into novels, story collections, collaborative works, and uncollected stories. The authors also endeavour to list books by series character and author pseudonym.

Most entries are illustrated with a black-and-white photograph of the dust wrapper of one of the author's books. There is also a very pleasing twelve-page colour spread illustrating some of the more interesting dust wrappers in the genre, as well as showing runs of the Agatha Christie, Margery Allingham, and John Dickson Carr titles.

While both the authors of this work are serious collectors of detective fiction, John Cooper is also a book dealer; and this is a guide-book to collecting the type of books that he sells. They certainly know the field, and thankfully have steered away from creating a price guide. Instead they will state 'such and such is by far the author's scarcest book,' which helps create more of a sense of relative value, certainly more useful in the long term.

If there is one major distraction with the book, it is the chatty nature of the descriptions. A novice collector may like descriptions such as 'For SUICIDE EXCEPTED (by Cyril Hare), Faber reverted to black cloth and gilt lettering. The front of the wrapper by Reinganum shows the hand of Mr. Dickinson reaching from his bed to the pill bottles on the bedside table, and the spine has pills dropping out of a bottle.' To a serious bibliographer, this may seem a bit tiresome. What about page counts, binding size, issue points? But then again, the scope of the volume is to make these books interesting to the collector, and perhaps this is the way to go about this. At least the descriptions are anything but dry!

There is a total of eleven appendices to the work, which cover such topics as subject collecting (I once met a collector who only collected mystery novels that had wine or wine merchants in the plot!), award-winning novels, and specialist dealers (John Cooper does not list himself, thank heaven!). There is a short glossary of terms (again, obviously for newcomers — John Carter's ABC for Book Collectors would probably be more handy).

The appendices go on to list selected publishers' methods of designating first editions, specialist journals pertaining to the field [with addresses, quite useful], societies and fan clubs [again, addresses], dust wrapper illustrators with short biographies, and a list of recommended authors and titles.

This is a book for the collector interested in forming a fine working library of first editions of their favourite crime fiction writers. A serious bibliography it is not, but there is a wealth of information not otherwise available, and it does add
a spark of life to one's shelves of reference books. The photographs are exciting, the presentation is personal, and the book is quite fun. And certainly we all need a bit of fresh air through the windows now and again!

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Studies in Bibliography, or sB, as it is often designated, was founded by Fredson Bowers in 1948 as a vehicle for the annual dissemination of serious work in what he saw as the 'new bibliography.' Because sB was able to attract the best scholars in the field, whether they thought they belonged to any particular 'school' or not, it flourished. Its magisterial reputation continues to this day, and the 1994 volume lives up to our annual expectations. A brief review cannot hope to adequately cover the great range of articles (fifteen of them), but something of the flavour of this volume can possibly be conveyed.

G. Thomas Tanselle leads off with his annual contribution called 'Editing without a Copy-Text.' He examines the concept of 'copy-text,' as enunciated in particular by W.W. Greg, in the context of whether critical editions of verbal works are necessary at all in our post-modern world. Having concluded that they 'are not merely inevitable; they are desirable,' he goes on to examine the procedures of critical judgement, subjective and objective, that should constitute the editorial process. The problems posed by what Bowers called 'radiating texts,' texts not represented in a clear linear series, are considered, and Tanselle points out that although radiating texts provide no clear copy-text it is still possible to edit them. He proposes what he calls 'constructive critical editing,' an approach that emphasizes rebuilding a text rather than amending an existing one. Although Lachmann is cited, it would seem that more of the experiences of the editors of classical texts would be pertinent to this discussion.

Paul Needham contributes a fascinating essay, 'Allan H. Stevenson and the Bibliographical Uses of Paper,' on one of the greatest paper historians, best known for his brilliant book The Problem of the Missale Speciale [1967]. Stevenson, who was born in Merlin, Ontario in 1903, was a peripatetic freelance scholar whose longest continuous job was as the cataloguer of the Hunt Botanical Library. He died in 1970, leaving many uncompleted projects, but his list of writings on paper evidence, beginning in 1948-49 in the first volume of sB, is impressive. Needham sets out in detail the significance of Stevenson's investigations of paper and paper-making equipment, emphasizing the skill and ingenuity with which he applied the evidence to particular bibliographical problems. He is most instructive, of course, concerning the Missale Speciale and particularly the evidence of the