
This rich collection of essays stems from the eighteenth Seminar on the British Book Trade held in Newcastle upon Tyne in 2000. This volume, like its predecessors, represents the work of established and new scholars and includes articles that are detailed research notes of work in progress, as well as fully developed scholarly papers. This blend is typical of the seminars which are a delight to attend. It thus provides a potential model for an annual publication, which might be considered by scholars in Canada.

In Canada, we have rich intellectual and social experiences at the Bibliographical Society of Canada conferences each year and some of the papers presented at those conferences appear eventually as peer-reviewed articles in *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada*. Scholars in the United Kingdom have for nearly thirty years had the opportunity not only to attend and participate in such conferences as those of the Bibliographical Society, but to join Professor Peter Isaac at annual events exploring aspects of the provincial book trade. Isaac is one of those ineffably special scholars who may be an endangered species. His primary field of endeavour prior to retirement was as a Professor of Civil and Public Health Engineering. That he has recently been a distinguished guest of and speaker at the Bibliographical Society of America, that he was President of the Bibliographical Society, that his impeccable scholarship has appeared in *The Library, Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, and other journals attests to the esteem in which he is rightly held. What these honours and articles do not portray, however, is the engaging and persuasive nature of Isaac in matters relating to aspects of the book trade not centred on that place called London. When it was not at all fashionable to do so, Isaac championed the cause of provincial book history and rallied numerous amateur and professional scholars to continue their long-standing work or to join newly in the endeavour.

Some of the results of this activity appear annually in pleasantly presented volumes, published most recently by Oak Knoll Press. These volumes are the proceedings of conferences held in a variety of locations in Britain. Initially, Isaac’s endeavours were focussed, understandably, on England and Wales, and his extensive and prescient work designing and expanding the British Book Trade
Index fitted well within this geographic range of interest. In more recent years however, some annual conferences have been held in Scotland and not only Scottish scholars but those from the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have boarded this friendly provincial vessel, expanding the definition of “province” to overseas dominions.

Peter Isaac and Barry McKay, Antiquarian Bookseller of note from the Lake District, have jointly edited these proceedings. The Moving Market is the final volume which Isaac will edit and it opens with a typically courteous yet provocative Editorial in which he takes issue (as he has in the past) with John Feather’s centre and periphery model. For the benefit of readers unfamiliar with the British book trade, Isaac states that the provincial trade “was more important to London publishers than the latter were to the provinces” and refers to studies based on the ESTC to support this “extra-metropolitan view” (x). While the historiography of Canadian book history is certainly different, Isaac’s stance resonates with one of the goals of the project for a History of the Book in Canada/L’histoire du livre et de l’imprimé au Canada (HBIC/HLIC), which is to address issues from all regions of the country and not to focus only on central Canada with its denser population, greater numbers of publications and agents of the book and allied trades, etc. The Canadian story is much more varied and interesting than a solely “central” story could tell – and the situation is just the same in the United Kingdom.

These essays illustrate this variety very effectively. The chronological coverage of the research represented here is from the beginning of book distribution in England (in Leicester) to the present (in Ipswich). Drawn from a wide array of sources: archival, newspapers, catalogues, and other publications, the essays cover many regions within the United Kingdom as well as Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand. The economics of the book trade are discussed from the perspective of most types of publication; from chapbooks and children’s books to newspapers and significant monographs. In a thorough article focussing on the Scottish trade, Iain Beavan offers new information and interpretations on one critical aspect of the workings of the trade outside London – the goals and achievements of booksellers’ societies. Physical aspects of book production, notably materials and labour, are addressed by two interesting pieces: Philip Henry Jones’s article on shortages of supply in Wales during the First World War, and Sydney Shep’s paper detailing a missionary
printer's difficulties in acquiring supplies in New Zealand. Isaac's own essay, based on thorough bibliographical sleuthing in the John Murray archives, tells the story of the commissioning and production of Landscape Illustrations of the Bible.

The extra-metropolitan theme is the thread throughout, including in the typically masterful paper by Richard Sher whose account (with the late Hugh Amory) of Andrew Millar's move from Scotland to London uncovers new material on Millar's Scottish years. Moreover, Sher emphasises another element typical of these annual seminars - the scholarly worth of investigating the sociological history of the book as well as the business history and using both to complement analytical bibliography. Aspects of this same emphasis are evident in Wallace Kirsop's highly effective use of newspapers and other resources to investigate and illustrate "How a Dubliner became the 'Melbourne Mudie'" (83).

The essay from which the collection's title is drawn, by David Hounslow, offers details concerning provincial editions of London street cries. Essays focussing on specific "provincial" areas, both urban and rural, in England and Wales include Maureen Bell's deeply researched and nuanced account of book ownership in Derbyshire; Jeffrey Smith's biographically focussed notes on books and culture in Newcastle; Lisa Peters's interesting new work on a particular Welsh newspaper company; John Hinks's painstakingly researched journey through medieval Leicester; Michael Powell and Terry Wyke's continuing delightful engagement with street bookselling in Manchester; Diana Dixon's bibliographical details about both short- and long-lived newspaper publishing endeavours in Middlesborough; Barry McKay's illuminating study of a "lottery" book and the teaching of reading; and Janet Phipps's survey of the history of bookselling in Ipswich from her perspective as an experienced insider in publishing and bookselling.

Since writing this review I have learned with great sadness, from Professor Isaac's daughter, of his sudden death in mid-June. The annual Seminar on the Book Trade, and ensuing volumes, will now carry on as continuing testaments to Isaac's scholarship of and enthusiasm for the rich book history of the "provinces."

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