

RED Letter

The Newsletter of the Reading Experience Database



SUMMER 2006

Edited by Rosalind Crone and Katie Halsey

As a result of the large grant awarded by the AHRC to this project in December 2005, the Reading Experience Database has entered a new phase, opening with the appointment of two new research fellows, Rosalind Crone, at the Open University, and Katie Halsey, at the Institute of English Studies in the University of London, this summer. We (Rosalind and Katie) would like to use this issue of RED Letter to introduce ourselves to you and to tell you about our exciting plans for the development of RED, particularly during the next twelve months, but also over the course of the next three years. In light of current interest in the history and practice of reading, RED has the potential to grow into a vital tool for researchers. We hope that through our work, and the contributions of others, RED will challenge and push the boundaries of the history of reading as we know it. Ranging from the early modern period through 1945, this database will provide new insight into the reading experiences not only of 'famous readers' in history, but also of the ordinary reader, a figure, until now, largely lost in time. As RED will be used by a large number of scholars from such a wide range of disciplines the development of this database offers a unique opportunity to identify real trends and patterns in the history of reading. At present, RED contains a substantial number of records relating to reading practices from c1450 to c1830. Thus, we intend to focus our energy on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For some time we have both been researching and writing about this period in history, and we hope that we can use our different fields of expertise to get RED on the web for your use as soon as possible.

And this marks an ideal moment to tell you a little about ourselves and our research interests. Rosalind moved to England from Australia some years ago to undertake further study in history at St John's College, Cambridge. She has recently completed her doctoral thesis, in which she examined representations of violence in entertainments such as popular theatre, street shows, crime reporting and cheap fiction in London during the nineteenth century. During this research she developed a

particular interest in responses to various texts, such as penny bloods, street broadsides, newspapers and playbills, especially among lower-class readers.

Katie wrote her PhD thesis on Jane Austen's readers at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. She has just moved from St Andrews, where she was working as a Teaching Fellow in Romantic Literature. She has a particular research interest in female readers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and is also interested in many aspects of Romantic period literature and culture. She is currently co-editing a volume of essays on the subject of conversation in the long eighteenth century.

The other members of the RED team are Mary Hammond and Bob Owens at the Open University, Simon Eliot at the Institute of English Studies, Stephen Colclough at the University of Wales, Bangor, and Alexis Weedon at the University of Luton.

Since our recent appointment, we have already set down plans to help relaunch RED and have some substantial targets that we hope to meet over the coming year. Most importantly, we are aiming to collect enough records to be able to launch the database in the public domain (on the World Wide Web) in summer 2007. We envisage that when we release it, RED will contain approximately 10,000 examples of reading experiences from 1450 to 1945, a number which we hope will continue to grow significantly to around 25,000 entries over the next three years. Scholars currently working in the field of reading and book history will be pleased to hear that after RED's launch we pledge to update the database as frequently as possible with new material we have found. Thus, regular searches by interested users should produce new and exciting results every month.

These are some considerable objectives, but we do not think they are unrealistic. We already feel greatly encouraged by the tremendous enthusiasm shown by so many towards this project and especially by the many offers of assistance we have had from those in the academy and kind volunteers. Now is an excellent opportunity for us to thank all those who have contributed to the database in the past. And we believe that if we are to achieve a truly diverse and valuable database we will continue to need your help. If, in your research, you come across a reading experience as defined on our website, we ask that you make a note of it and contribute it to the database. Although in our own work we will be focusing intensively on the period 1800 to 1945, we welcome any references to reading experiences across the whole period covered by the database, 1450 to 1945. Ideally, we need as much detail as possible. However, we are also aware of your time constraints and pressures, and therefore have kept the option of filling in a short form electronically on our website. Moreover, we understand that you may not have access to the internet. For your convenience, we are happy to send a hard copy of the long form to you. You might like to take this form with you to the library or archives and simply fill in the relevant information if you happen to find something of interest. We can have data from hard copy forms keyed into the database. It is only with your help that we can make RED a wonderful research tool for scholars and indeed anyone with an interest in how texts were read and thought about in the past.

We also plan to continue to build the RED website as a public forum for those interested in the history of reading to facilitate conversation between us all. We invite you to submit announcements for new publications and conferences, seminars or

workshops in this general field, which we will happily advertise on the site and in future issues of this newsletter. Finally, we will place regular updates on the RED website to keep you in touch with our progress on the database and to inform you of any extra bits of news that we think might be of interest for you. We will also be producing this newsletter quarterly, which will appear online. At present, we have a growing list of subscribers to whom we send RED Letter and relevant updates by email. Please send us an email if you would like to be included on this list. We are also happy to post hard copies of RED Letter: please get in touch with either Katie at the Institute of English Studies or Rosalind at the Open University. And if you would be interested in displaying a poster in your workplace, please also let us know. We are both only too happy to help!

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND CALLS FOR PAPERS

SEMINAR SERIES

Publishing Periodicals: Seminars in Book History and Bibliography 2006
University of London, Institute of English Studies, School of Advanced Studies
Organised by the Book History and Bibliography Research Group, the Open
University, and the Institute of English Studies, University of London
Mondays, 5:30-7pm

Venue: Room ST273 (2nd Floor, Stewart House), Senate House, Malet St,
London, WC1E 7HU. Tel: 020 78628675

Programme

October 9th, 2006
John Stokes and Mark Turner (King's College, London)
'Editing Wilde's Journalism'

October 23rd, 2006
Laurel Brake (Birkbeck, University of London)
'Town and Country?: the Northern Star, the Leader, and multiple editions'

November 6th, 2006
David Finkelstein (Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh)
'Rating Literary Standing through Victorian Periodical Contents Pages: a case study of The Maid of Sker'

November 20th, 2006
Sally Ledger (Birkbeck, University of London)
'Household Words: Politics and the Mass Market'

January 29th, 2007
Suzanne Paylor and Jim Mussell (Birkbeck, University of London)
"A picture or a Thousand Words": the use of images in the nineteenth-century periodical press and how they are reproduced today'

February 12th, 2007
Joanne Shattock (University of Leicester)
'The Reviewing Culture 1830-1860'

February 26th, 2007
Bernard Capp (University of Warwick)
'Cheap print and the stars: almanacs and the almanac-trade in early modern England'

March 12th, 2007
Isobel Armstrong (Birkbeck, University of London)
'Trade Union Poetics: Poems in The Flint-Glass Makers' Magazine over the great strike of 1858-9'

Organiser: Dr Mary Hammond, the Open University
(m.e.hammond@open.ac.uk)

CONFERENCE

Print Networks Conference, Trinity College Dublin
The Printing House Trinity College Dublin 25-27 July 2006
For further information, see <http://www.tcd.ie/Library/PrintNetworks/>

CONFERENCE

The Atlantic World of Print in the Age of Franklin
Philadelphia, 29-30 September 2006
For further details and information see <http://www.sharpweb.org/atlantic.html> or
contact: mceas@ccat.sas.upenn.edu

CONFERENCE

Printing in England: The First 25 Years
British Library, London, 11 December 2006

A one-day conference to launch volume XI of the Catalogue of Books Printed in the XVth Century Now in the British Library (BMC)

The British Library announces the forthcoming publication (by Hes & De Graaf Publishers of the Netherlands) of the latest volume, describing the output of the first English printing-houses, in a series of catalogues of the Library's incunabula that began in 1908.

On Monday 11 December 2006 the British Library will hold a conference to celebrate the new catalogue, which has been edited and compiled by Lotte Hellinga with contributions from Paul Needham, Margaret Nickson and John Goldfinch.

It contains full descriptions of the Library's collection of English incunabula and includes an extensive Introduction describing in detail the arrival of printing in England and its early development, with sections on the printers, their technique, the texts and their readers, typography, paper, early owners and the development of the Library's collection.

The conference will aim to define the ways in which the new catalogue can be used as a starting block for new explorations in the history of printing in England.

Speakers will include Maureen Bell, Julia Boffey, Cristina Dondi, A.S.G. Edwards, Mary Erler, Margaret Ford, William Kuskin, James Mosley, Paul Needham, David Pearson, Susan Powell.

Participation is free, but registration is required.

For further information, please contact John Goldfinch, john.goldfinch@bl.uk.

To register please contact Teresa Harrington, British and Early Printed Collections, The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB, United Kingdom. T +44 (0)20 7412 7785. E-mail: teresa.harrington@bl.uk

CALL FOR PAPERS

Book History Postgraduate Student Network Study Day
University of Liverpool, 13 October 2006

In association with the Book History Research Network, the History of the Book Research Group at the University of Liverpool will be organising a Study Day on Friday, 13 October 2006. The Study Day will be held in the Senior Common Room on the fifth floor of the Modern Languages Building (no. 71 on the University Campus Plan <http://www.liv.ac.uk/maps/precinctplan.htm>).

Abstracts are invited for 10- or 20-minute presentations on any area of the history of the book. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Book and manuscript production
- Bookselling and trading
- Collecting and libraries

- Reading and readership
- Typography, lettering and calligraphy
- Editing (including electronic editing)

DEADLINE: 1 August 2006

Abstracts should be submitted to Dr Pollie Bromilow
pollie.bromilow@liverpool.ac.uk by 1 August 2006.

Call for Papers and further details at:

<http://www.liv.ac.uk/sml/conferences/BookHistory/index.htm>

CALL FOR PAPERS

Print Culture and the Novel, 1850 -1900

English Faculty, University of Oxford, 20 January 2007

Organisers: Adelene Buckland and Beth Palmer

No longer was it possible for people to avoid reading matter; everywhere they went it was displayed - weekly papers at a penny or twopence, complete books, enticing in their bright picture covers, at a shilling, and all fresh and crisp from the press. No wonder that the fifties, which saw the spread of Smith's stalls to almost every principal railway line in the country, were also the period when the sales of books and periodicals reached unprecedented levels.

2007 will mark fifty years since the publication of Richard Altick's ground breaking *The English Common Reader* and as the influential work approaches its half-century it is perhaps time to consider, review and collate recent scholarly work addressing one of the main concerns of the text: the relationship between print culture and the novel. This conference seeks to interrogate the various relationships not only between the novel and the periodical, but between a whole range of emergent print forms as they developed in the period, such as advertising, illustration, cartoons and pamphlets. Adumbrated in the *Common Reader*, the ways in which the novel was made available to readers can be productively re-thought in the light of new research taking place in this field.

Focussing on the second half of the nineteenth century we encourage a broad interpretation of the themes which might include, but are not limited to:

- The commercialisation of the novel
- The author as professional
- Serialisation
- The role of the publisher in the development of the novel
- Readerships
- The novel as an institution of print culture

DEADLINE: 1 September 2006

We welcome papers taking an interdisciplinary approach that productively combine literary with book-history methodologies. We invite proposals for papers of 20

minutes duration. 200-250 word proposals should be sent to printculture@ell.ox.ac.uk by 1st September 2006

Further information can be found on our website:

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~printcc/conference/>

CALL FOR PAPERS

'Censorship, Persecution and Resistance in Marian England'

Newham College, Cambridge, 12-14 April 2007

The Stationers' Company charter was created in 1557. Nearly 450 years after the foundation of that charter, proposals are invited for papers (20 mins. in length) for a conference on censorship, persecution & resistance in Marian England. Papers on the book trade, the Marian regime, martyrdom, and religious/political control or resistance during Mary's reign are particularly welcome.

DEADLINE: 31 October 2006

Proposals in the form of a 300 word abstract should be sent to [Dr Elizabeth Evenden](mailto:Dr.Elizabeth.Evenden@newham.ac.uk), Newham College, Cambridge. CB3 9DF

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Books of Venice: A Conference on the Book in Venice

Venice, Italy, March 9-10, 2007

Venice's books, like the buildings described by Ruskin, have long been considered one of her greatest glories. Venice and the Veneto were hosts to some of the earliest book printers in Italy; the workplace of master publishers from Aldus Manutius in the sixteenth century to the Remondini in the eighteenth; the home of remarkable libraries such as those of Cardinal Bessarion and Girolamo Ascanio Molin; and the subject of countless works of fact and fiction. The Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing (SHARP) announces a conference to bring together in Venice scholars of Venice to consider its remarkable roles in book history, including but not limited to such topics as:

- The book trade in Venice
- Print and manuscript in Venice
- La Serenissima Stampata: Venice in books and prints
- Fictional Venice
- Venice and Beyond

The papers selected will be presented in three half-day plenary sessions at the Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti.

The keynote addresses will be given by Lilian Armstrong (Wellesley College), Neil Harris (Università di Udine) and Marino Zorzi (Biblioteca Marciana). There will also be a half-day lecture and workshop called "Printing in the Shadow of Aldus Manutius." It will be led by Peter Koch of Editions Koch, and will give participants an introduction to their work, including their new fine-press edition of Joseph Brodsky's Watermark.

DEADLINE: 15 October 2006

Short proposals (200-300 words) for 20-minute papers (in English or Italian) on these and other topics should be submitted to the conference organizers Craig Kallendorf (kallendrf@tamu.edu) and Lisa Pon (lpon@smu.edu) by October 15, 2006. Two slots are being reserved for papers by graduate students who will receive a partial subvention for their travel expenses. It is anticipated that a selection of papers from this conference will be published.

The conference is sponsored by the [Biblioteca Marciana](#) and the [Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti](#) and generously supported by the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation.

CALL FOR PAPERS

A World Elsewhere: Orality, Manuscript and Print in Colonial and Post-Colonial Cultures

An international conference to be held at the Centre for the Book, Cape Town, 2-4 April 2007

DEADLINE: 1 September 2006

Please send abstracts (500 words maximum) or proposals for sessions by 1 September 2006 to Mark Espin, PO Box 15254, Vlaeberg, Cape Town 8018, South Africa; or ideally by e-mail to Mark.Espin@nlsa.ac.za, and cc to j.gouws@ru.ac.za. A preliminary programme should be announced by 1 December 2006.

The conference will address a wide range of questions relating to 'the history of the book' in colonial and post-colonial contexts. Relevant topics include:

- national and transnational communities of letters;
- alternative public spheres;
- censorship;
- the history of reading and reading theories;
- reviewing and criticism;
- authorship;
- sociologies of the text;
- text and image;
- the economies of cultural prestige;
- media history;
- the cultures of collecting;
- library history;
- literacy;
- oral cultures;

- orality and print;
- printing and publishing history;
- the marketing and distribution of books;
- the electronic text;
- and the future of the book.

As a sub-theme, it is hoped that the conference will address issues relating to the identification, preservation and dissemination of, and access to, Southern African textual culture, at a time when the heritage of the past is threatened and the outlook for the future is uncertain. The purpose is to bring together all stakeholders: academics working in the fields of Textual Studies, Book and Cultural History, the Media, Anthropology, and new and old technologies of the text, archivists, librarians, educationalists, publishers, public administrators, funding bodies and government. It is hoped that special attention will be given to the development of protocols for recording Southern African orature and performance art. The purpose of the conference is to examine the present and to plan for the future: how do we ensure that future generations have access to our past, present and future textual cultural heritage? We would welcome the participation of international delegates whose experience elsewhere could inform our deliberations.

Through an engagement with questions of identifying and maintaining material resources, and enabling access to the continuing Southern African textual heritage, the conference seeks to investigate a broader set of theoretical themes around texts and textuality. Have particular configurations of South African society produced unique understandings of what texts are and how they might be used? Have there been styles of reading, interpretation and textual use in the past that have dropped from view? (For example, early African Christianity has produced interesting forms of divinely inspired reading and writing.) What kinds of different relationships, institutions and communities have been built up in and through texts, and in what ways are they peculiarly South African? Are there analogues elsewhere? How might we understand such practices, and in what ways should they influence protocols for the maintenance of, and access to, cultural heritages?

CALL FOR PAPERS

Beyond the Book: Contemporary Cultures of Reading

A conference at the University of Birmingham, UK

1 & 2 September 2007

Keynote Speakers:

Janice Radway (Duke University) & Elizabeth Long (Rice University)

Book groups, Lit Blogs, on-line bookstores, book festivals, reader magazines, 'One Book, One Community,' Reader's Guides, 'Richard & Judy's Book Club,' Book TV, 'Canada Reads,' the 'Nancy Pearl Action Figure,' 'Tuesday Night Book Club,'... reading is hot!

This conference will explore the diverse formations, mediations, practices and representations of reading and readers in the contemporary moment. Cultures of reading are dynamic and complex: they involve not only readers reading, but also multiple agencies including publishers, booksellers, broadcast networks, national,

regional and municipal governments, and educational institutions. The aim of the conference is to interrogate the relations among these agents and their investment in the meanings of reading. The study of readers and reading encourages, maybe demands, multi- and interdisciplinary analysis. We therefore invite scholars from across the humanities and social sciences to consider the contemporary meanings and experiences of reading in any culture or location. Selected papers will be included in an edited collection on contemporary cultures of reading/book cultures.

Possible topics for consideration:

- Reading as a form of popular culture
- Books & reading as cultural events
- Investigating reading and reader response: methodological problems and strategies
- The production of readers and/or reading
- Books/ Reading and/ in/ through the mass media
- Reading spaces
- Reading together: shared reading
- Reading as a medium of/ for social change
- Reading practices
- Reading and the state

DEADLINE: 15 January 2007

Please send proposals for 20-minute papers (abstracts of 200-300 words) or complete three-person panel sessions (including abstracts for each paper) by 15 January 2007 to: burrealz@adf.bham.ac.uk, using "BTB proposal" as the subject line in your email.

Proposals may also be sent to:

Beyond the Book Conference
Department of American & Canadian Studies
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston, Birmingham
B15 2TT
UK

Beyond the Book is a three-year collaborative interdisciplinary AHRC-funded research project investigating contemporary cultures of reading. The transatlantic BTB team are: DeNel Rehberg Sedo (Mount Saint Vincent University, Canada), Danielle Fuller, Anouk Lang & Anna Burrells (University of Birmingham, UK).

PRIZE: GRADUATE STUDENT ESSAY PRIZE

The editors of [BOOK HISTORY](#) announce the sixth annual competition for a prize to be awarded to the outstanding graduate student essay submitted to our journal on any subject that falls within the broadest definition of book history. Submissions for the coming editorial year will be accepted until 31 August 2006, and will be open to anyone pursuing a course of graduate studies at the time of submission. The author of

the winning essay will receive a prize of \$400 and the essay will be published in the journal.

For information on the journal and its submission policies, please visit the *Book History* website (<http://www.sharpweb.org/bookhist.html>) or contact the editors directly:

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