



THE EDITORS

P.O. Box 567.
Neutral Bay Junction 2089

NEXT MEETING.....NEXT MEETING.....NEXT MEETING.....NEXT MEETING.....

The next meeting will take place at the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre, Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli on Wednesday 7 September at 6.30pm

Speaker: Paul Bick, consultant to the Australia Council

Subject: The moral or "non-economic" rights of the author.

Mr Bick is a lawyer who has practised as a barrister and has lectured in the Faculty of Law, University of Queensland. He is undertaking on behalf of the Australia Council an investigation into the moral (or "non-economic") rights of the author. This concerns the capacity of the author to ensure, in the publication process as a whole, that the integrity of his/her work is maintained. Mr Bick has a special brief to advise the Australia Council on whether legislation could (or should) be introduced in this area and if so what form it might take.

This controversial subject is sure to raise some interesting questions on aspects of the author-editor relationship.

RSVP: Monica Ardill, 406.4288, by Monday 5 September. Dinner with wine is still only \$8. The caterers need to know the number so please don't fail to ring.

LAST MEETING

At our last meeting, Tony Barker, author/compiler of Dear Robertson, a collection of letters to and from George Robertson of Angus and Robertson, showed himself to be thoroughly versed in the experience of both sides of the manuscript.

Tony worked as an Angus & Robertson editor from 1966 to 1973, the year of George Ferguson's retirement and the takeover by Gordon Barton.

Angus & Robertson also published his first book, a compilation of the letters of Norman Lindsay.

George Ferguson, grandson of George Robertson, was first interested in a collection of Robertson letters. However, his move out of Sydney made his research physically difficult. The Robertson file was a vast one, represented by three collections in the Mitchell Library. George Robertson has been a friend of David Mitchell - indeed, had encouraged Mitchell to collect Australiana. In 1917, the Mitchell already held its first collection of Robertson letters, which George Robertson, no doubt with an eye to posterity, carefully culled while the library was being remodelled.

Mitchell also purchased Angus & Robertson letters in 1933 and in 1970. When Tony Barker suggested himself as the author of the final book, and set out to Mitchell, fortified by a Literature Board Grant, he admits that he had not realised the mammoth task involved.

He began with a list of important Angus & Robertson authors, such as Lawson. His first discovery was that authors do not always write fascinating literary letters to publishers. Banjo Paterson's, apart from his letter from Heliopolis during World War I, were generally terse and businesslike. The only communication he discovered from Breaker Morant simply noted a change of address.

It was a very different task to compiling the Lindsay collection. Lindsay wrote many letters to friends discussing art and philosophy, and included interesting gossip. There had been a change in library restrictions on photocopying and reading documents. Handcopying and checking was an arduous task in itself. There were also problems of restrictions on publication of works of the living - a real problem in the many cases when it was not clear whether authors were still living - and difficulties in discovering heirs and copyright holders when they were dead.

From late 1979 to November 1980, Tony Barker read and handcopied letters. He then spent a month organising materials, writing introductions and connections, and combining the results of the gargantuan task within an explanatory text.

His next task was letter-writing on his own behalf to gain permission to use unpublished material, protected by copyright in perpetuity.

Robertson's letters and many others were not a problem, as Angus & Robertson held copyright. There were, however, about forty, including those of Hugh McRae, Christopher Brennan and Paterson, which required permissions.

The frustration of uncovering copyright holders, particularly since many, while donating letters to Mitchell, prefer to remain anonymous, was epitomised by Brennan's case. Tony was recommended to contact a Mr Pennington, resident in France. Mr Pennington did reply, suggesting Tony contact Axel Clark, Brennan's biographer, who indeed had often been sitting opposite Tony in Mitchell Library. Axel Clark was more easily contacted, and was able to inform Tony that the Brennan letters copyright was held by Angus & Robertson.

In other instances, trustees of estates, such as Mary Gilmore's, felt a protective obligation and refused permission to quote letters in full. Others worried about misinterpretation of terms in letters which might show the author in a poor light. There were letters to biographers, universities and publishing houses, and eventually a final manuscript which was also legally publishable.

At this point Tony discovered the agony of the author, as he left his editing role. He was attached, for example, to a title bestowed originally by a disgruntled author, Anguish & Robbery. This did not appeal to contemporary A&R.

Nor would it have appealed to George Robertson, by all accounts. The publisher emerged as the strong and binding personality of the collection. Robertson originally published as a sideline to his bookselling. In the early days, he shared profits - his first commercial success being The Man from Snowy River - until he eventually purchased the printery which was to become Halstead Press. He was a publisher also making grand gestures, proving his worth to Glasgow, and repaying Australia with the publication of the Australian Encyclopaedia. He was irritated when authors showed suspicion of his intentions. He was also an autocrat who gave his editors (and himself) a very liberal hand with a manuscript. Yet he could handle an author like Norman Lindsay very well.

It was a particularly pertinent theme for editors, both in terms of Tony Barker's experience as author/editor/compiler, and for the glimpses of a past era of publishing house/author relationships in Australia.

TRAINING WORKSHOPS

The copy editing workshop, held on Wednesday 24 August, was a great success. Our panel, Jacqui Kent and Sue Wagner, presented a detailed description of the elements involved in preparing a raw manuscript for typesetting. All present enjoyed the opportunity for comparing styles and techniques during the workshop segment of the evening.

The next workshop is planned for Wednesday 5 October. It will be held at the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre and will run from 7 to 10pm. The subject for the evening will be indexing, and the fee for the evening is \$5. Any further enquiries please contact Desney Jackson 517.1011.

Galley Club

Any interested editors are invited to attend meetings of the Galley Club. On Wednesday 21 September Rod Mead of the Sydney book packagers, Mead & Becket, will discuss 'How a book packager works.'

The speaker for Wednesday 19 October is Alicia Lee, a psychologist who has recently completed a study of 'women as outgroup'. She will speak on the topic 'Women and women people: how our language treats women as not quite people'.

For further details, contact Rhonda Black on 922 6399 or Rex Finch on 662 8777.

FROM JACARANDA WILEY

Janette Whelan, after 8 years with Jacaranda Wiley Ltd, latterly as senior editor heading the company's desk editorial department, leaves on 3 August 1983 to work as a freelancer. Experienced in all aspects of book production, and offering a fast, efficient service in editing and proofing school/college texts and general books, Jan can be contacted at 11 Howard Street, Rosalie Qld. 4064 (07) 369 8681

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