

News, Notes and Queries

PROJECT FOR HISTORICAL BIOBIBLIOGRAPHY

Dawson & Sons Ltd. are pleased to announce that they have made a research grant to the University of Newcastle upon Tyne for a major project in historical biography and bibliography. Under the direction of P. J. Wallis, Reader in the Historical Bibliography of Education, the project will combine in computer-held records a wide range of British source material for subsequent publication. An essential aim of the project is to eliminate the duplication of scholarly work in associated fields, dependent on regular use of the same sources. A Project Steering Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. B. J. Enright, Librarian of the University, is responsible for the administration of exchanges between the project and specialist holdings from scholars working in related fields of research.

AUTHOR UNION CATALOGUE

In the early stages of the project, which began in August 1975, work will focus on the eighteenth century, with considerable time devoted to laying the groundwork for an author union catalogue of books printed in English or by British authors. Work on the catalogue of the British Library is already advanced, and during the next three years material from the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Cambridge University Library catalogues will be combined, so giving coverage of the larger majority of books published during the years 1701–1800.

The preparation of the basic computer file will take place in the University Computer Laboratory, which has very considerable experience in bibliographic applications, and very powerful resources. This file can be used for the production of interim printouts and various types of analysis, as well as for publication through the use of computer-driven phototypesetting equipment.

The author union catalogue will include epithets and dates with the authors' names, together with other designations needed for cross-referencing or to allow for differences in library practices. Titles will be abbreviated considerably to the minimum necessary for identification through the use of keywords. Every entry will include proper nouns; for similar titles and especially for anonymous works, longer entries will be needed. Further editions will be indicated briefly by number and date. Places of publication, other than London, will be given as will format and library locations. Works will be classified by using the first three Dewey numbers. Multiple, especially double, classification will be used for clarification where required, and this inclusion will make possible the publication of classified catalogues and bibliographies. Notes will refer to standard authorities such as Halkett and Laing for anonyms and pseudonyms.

Discussions have begun with other libraries about possible co-operation and inclusion of their material with the substantial holdings noted above. As a consequence it is hoped that the union catalogue to be published in 1979 will be greatly enriched. An important step in this direction is the provision of a grant to the project from the Wellcome Trust toward the addition of eighteenth-century items from the Library of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, and from other significant collections of medical books.

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UNIFIED BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY

Work has also begun on the inclusion in the computer record of material from a number of standard biographical sources and from a British Societies project supported by the British Academy. The Wellcome Trust grant already mentioned provides also for the inclusion of medical biographical data.

The biographical information will be used to edit material already available from the Book Subscription Lists Project, begun in 1972 and supported by a Social Science Research Council grant (see *The Library*, Fifth Series, 29: No 3, September 1974). Publication of the subscription list data and of the unified biographical dictionary for the period to 1760 is planned for 1979/80.

The Director's *Biobibliography of British Mathematics and its Applications up to 1850* emphasises both the biographical and the bibliographical nature of the project. It was begun in 1966 and has been supported by various bodies including the Royal Society and by the award of a Leverhulme Fellowship. The first part (1701-60) should appear in 1979. It will be preceded by the publication early in 1977 of his *Newton and Newtoniana (1672-1975)*, which will greatly extend the coverage of Gray's well-known bibliography. Both works will contain far more detail than the union catalogue data generally; further they indicate the way in which other specialist publications may benefit from confirmation with the data on file.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Almost all the files mentioned above are open-ended. The potential for the addition of material from other library catalogues and biographical sources has already been mentioned. Biographical data could be enriched from a multitude of primary and secondary sources as well as from studies of eighteenth-century professions, trades and other groups.

The Director particularly wishes to draw attention to the benefits that might come through the combination in the file of specialist holdings from scholars who would receive in return a feed-back from the data bank. Those wishing to consider co-operation are invited to write to the Director (P. J. Wallis) or the Senior Research Associate (Dr. F. J. G. Robinson): Project for Historical Biobibliography, School of Education, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU, England.