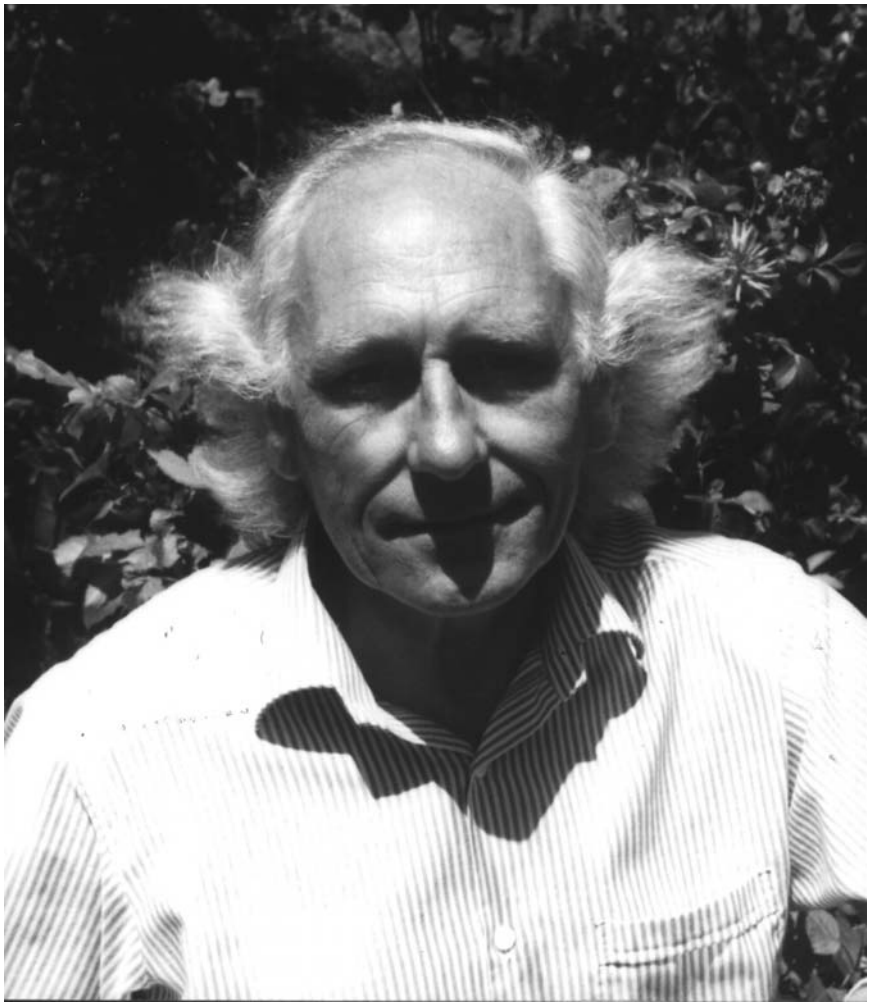

DON MCKENZIE

Donald Francis McKenzie
1931–1999

DON MCKENZIE was Professor of English Language and Literature in Victoria University of Wellington, and later Professor of Bibliography and Textual Criticism in Oxford. One of the most stimulating teachers of his generation, he gave to bibliographical study new purposes and insights, and argued for its place at the centre of literary and historical understanding. In a lifetime divided between his native New Zealand and Britain, he sought to influence national values in both countries, whether in bibliography, theatre, publishing, or librarianship. A quick critical intelligence, an almost intuitive gift for friendship, personal sensitivity and a striking liveliness in his appearance, all informed his professional and private life alike.

He was born on 5 June 1931 in Timaru, South Canterbury, New Zealand, the son of Leslie Alwyn Olson McKenzie and his wife Millicent Irene. He was the eldest of four brothers and a sister. His father, a boot-maker, was restless; and as the family moved about so Don moved also: when he reached Palmerston North Boys' High School he had attended about a dozen primary and secondary schools. But by the time he left Palmerston North he had made a lifelong friend in Iain Lonie, who became a distinguished poet and whose premature death in 1988 caused him great distress.

On leaving school in 1948, and a summer job in a meat freezing plant that turned him into a vegetarian, he joined the staff of the Post Office, as a cadet. There he was appointed to the Public Relations Department in Wellington, a situation that both provided a living and permitted him to

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enrol part-time at what was then still Victoria University College. At this time he met Don Peebles, an artist from Christchurch, who introduced him to a world of art, film, and theatre of which hitherto he had little or no inkling: the two also became lifelong friends. In this world he married Dora Haigh, slightly older than himself, more widely cultured, and likewise sharing an interest in the theatre. Among those who taught him was Keith Maslen, later of the English Department at Otago, whose understanding of the history of printing proved to be a formative part of Don's subsequent work. As a part-time student, his road to a degree was slow. In 1954 he took his BA, and in 1955 (uncertain of a career) a diploma in journalism. In 1957 he graduated MA with first-class honours in English, his thesis being on Compositor B's role in the second quarto of *The Merchant of Venice*.[1]

He had joined the Post Office as a public servant, a title of which he was proud: 'a public servant, devoted not only to my own job but to the political philosophy that seemed to me then to inform our society, in its concern for full employment, good and free health care, free education, and help for the old and ailing to live out their lives with dignity'. If some of his memory was idealistic, other aspects were real enough. McCarthyism, the Korean War, and domino theories about the spread of Communism all affected public opinion. For failing to stand for the national anthem in the cinema, and for discussing republican ideas with his workmates at the Post Office, he attracted the attention of the New Zealand secret intelligence service, who also discovered that he kept books by Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky, as well as the Communist Manifesto (all, in fact, prescribed for a course in political science he was following at university) in his home. It was further noted that he had received an invitation from a Russian organisation to see ballet films.[2]

Don maintained the principle of political liberty, and for a while was to consider standing for Parliament; but though he learned to keep his politics more to himself, he felt uncomfortable in the employ of so inquisitive a state. When, therefore, he was invited by Ian Gordon, Head of the English Department, to teach temporarily at Victoria, he was doubly glad to accept. A few months later, supported with a Unilever scholarship to study at Cambridge, he embarked with his wife and baby son Matthew to begin at Corpus Christi College in autumn 1957.

[1] Published in *Studies in Bibliography*, 12 (1959), 75–89.

[2] Speech on receiving an honorary doctorate from Victoria University of Wellington, 10 Dec. 1997. A few copies of this speech, with the associated ceremonies, were later printed in Wellington for private circulation.

The tale of his period as a research student in Cambridge in the late 1950s is one to make most students, and most supervisors, blench. He had family responsibilities. His initial project grew out of interests nurtured partly by his wife Dora, in early English drama. Under Philip Gaskell's guidance he embarked on a study of the working conditions of English printers in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. This took him naturally to the archives of the Stationers' Company, and in due course his first book. He was still working on other parts of that extraordinary and still under-exploited archive at the time of his death. But, for the purposes of his thesis, he found himself in a blind alley.

The discovery of the extent of the late-seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century records of Cambridge University Press came therefore as a godsend. Although they were not completely unknown, having been referred to by S. C. Roberts in his history of the Press published as long ago as 1921, they had never been investigated in detail, and they had been only summarily arranged. They seem to have been introduced to him partly by John Oates, of the University Library; but this was no simple matter, in that the papers were not in the Library, where they might easily be visited, but still in the University's central administrative offices, where they were guarded by a formidably protective University Archivist. Somehow, with Oates's help, Don was accepted, and he not only transcribed a vast body of material, but also analysed it and brought everything into shape within the space of just two years—all the time that remained with his scholarship money after the false start.

His thesis, published as *The Cambridge University Press, 1696–1712; a bibliographical study*, appeared in two volumes in 1966, the first an analysis of the organisation and (to a rather lesser extent) the policy of the Press, together with a detailed bibliography of its output at this time, the second a transcript of the surviving documents: not just the formal records of decisions made, and the annual balance sheets, but also the weekly tallies (in sometimes minute detail) of all the miscellaneous equipment required. The records are unequalled in any printing-house in Britain before the nineteenth century, and they have the advantage of being close in date to the first English printer's manual, Joseph Moxon's *Mechanick exercises on the whole art of printing* (1683–4). Moxon has, inevitably, to bear the burden of being used as a commentary on printers and printing up to a century previously, the generations of Shakespeare and his immediate successors and the period to which most bibliographical and editorial work was devoted until the 1960s; but *Mechanick exercises* also reflects Moxon's own preferred interests; it is far from

comprehensive, and Moxon himself was no printer. On some activities and equipment, he is obsessively detailed; on others, he offers little or nothing. But in all matters his statements could now be tested against the Cambridge record of daily reality.

The Press had been re-established at the instigation of the classical scholar Richard Bentley (not yet Master of Trinity College), and in due course it printed his editions of Horace (1711) and of Terence (1726). Thanks to Bentley, who contrived to extract from its reluctant author a revised second edition (the first having been published in London) the Press also printed Newton's *Principia* in 1713. With the exception of *Psyche*, a long poem by Joseph Beaumont, Master of Peterhouse, it printed little English poetry, and there was no drama. To some subsequent students of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature this seemed a disadvantage. Not only was this not a London press, but as a learned press it also had a quite different kind of list when compared with those emanating from the modest premises that had produced the plays of Shakespeare, his contemporaries and successors, or the poems of Elizabethan, Jacobean, and later seventeenth-century England. However, while acknowledging the differences, Don argued that the similarities were more important, pointing out that though the University Printer was a Dutchman (Cambridge, like Oxford and John Fell before it, had had to import the skills and equipment necessary for a learned press), many of the other staff—journeymen and apprentices—were English, some from London itself. There was no intrinsic difference that could be confidently attributed to country rather than town working practices. In his view, it followed that much (though not all) of what he had discovered concerning the management of a press fifty miles away from London was not only applicable to London but also, to a great extent, to London of a century or so earlier. The records of the operation of a small, loss-making, university press were relevant to the production and therefore editing of many renaissance texts.

These two volumes on the details of men and work at Cambridge University Press between 1696 and 1712 led to a transformation of bibliographical studies, demolishing and blowing away some of the more imaginative theories of textual bibliography based on examination of individual books alone. Don demonstrated conclusively the fundamental importance of concurrent production: not only that several books passed through the printing house at one time, but also that each could be shared often haphazardly among several workmen. As David Fleeman expressed it in reviewing the work, here was 'a salutary reminder that no book can

be properly analysed in isolation'.[3] In 1963, Charlton Hinman had enunciated a comparable lesson in his account of *The printing and proof-reading of the First Folio of Shakespeare*, demonstrating how the First Folio was printed over an unexpectedly long period, at the same time that other books were passing through the hands of Jaggard's workmen. Don, setting documentary evidence beside surviving copies of the finished books, showed how very much more complicated the process was even than Hinman had realised.

To the end of his life, it remained a wonder to Don that the Cambridge English Faculty agreed to pass a thesis so evidently linked to economic history, supervised in its last year by Peter Mathias. They condoned Don's work only after vigorous arguments on his behalf by his supervisor. This was, after all, the faculty that contained not just Muriel Bradbrook and F. R. Leavis (of whose work Don helped compile a checklist in 1966[4]), but other factions besides. Gaskell, with the help of his father-in-law H. S. Bennett, a senior member of the faculty and one sympathetic to historical bibliography, and also sustained by Bruce Dickins, tutor in charge of graduate students at Corpus Christi College, pressed support for Don's work at crucial moments. His two examiners were adamantly in favour, and this most unlikely body consisting mostly of literary critics agreed the case.

In fact, and as Don knew, the application of responsible bibliographical principles to critical understanding was to be a protracted battle. In 1958, Fredson Bowers delivered his Sandars lectures at Cambridge, home to a particular kind of literary criticism that generally set little value on understanding how printed texts were made, reproduced, and recreated. Don's review of these lectures, commissioned by John Oates (a man with whom he shared a very similar sense of humour) and published in *The Library*, was frank as to the practical difficulties.

> Whereas in the past the literary editor with a little learning in textual matters could always justify his position in a university by undergraduate teaching, the textual bibliographer is pedagogically useless except at research level. University promotion of textual, let alone analytical, bibliography is therefore all too likely to be opposed, as it is at Cambridge. My point is simply that the problem requires discussion in terms wider than those of critical nescience.[5]

[3] *The Library*, 5th ser. 23 (1969), 76.
[4] D. F. McKenzie and M. P. Allum, *F. R. Leavis: a check list, 1924–1964* (1966).
[5] Review of Fredson Bowers, *Textual and literary criticism*, in *The Library*, 5th ser. 14 (1959), 208–13.

Don's roots were in New Zealand. Though his strong affinities with English scholarship were now bound by new friendships, he always expected to return home. Having obtained his Ph.D., in 1960 he returned to Wellington, first to a lectureship in the English Department and then advancing until in 1969 a new Chair was created for him in his department. As a lecturer, he was irresistible, and his ability to galvanise students, taking them into interests of which they had little previous idea, remained throughout his career. His passion for theatre, for acting, and for the use of the voice all contributed to his mastery at the podium (which he treated almost as a stage) and in class, while his evident commitment to students' work made him a teacher who was also widely cherished.

During his time at Wellington, theatre, printing, and publishing were everyday components of the way in which he saw the Department and his duties. From 1964 he was a member of the University's Publications Committee, and he worked to establish Victoria University Press in its own right. From 1970 to 1973 he served as Dean of Languages and Literature, taking the opportunity to foster more understanding and teaching of Maori. Don also took up his old connections with local theatre, and in 1964 became a foundation member of the management committee of the new professional Downstage Theatre. In this capacity he took a key part in building the Hannah Playhouse, and seeing Downstage into it. Between 1968 and 1970 he served on the Indecent Publications Tribunal, but his hopes for changes in attitude withered in the face of increasing amounts of commercial pornography. His concern for libraries made him an obvious choice as a trustee of the National Library, where he argued vigorously (and latterly in the face of contrary management policies) for the continuing importance of both the National Library and the Turnbull Library (including its great collection of John Milton) as research collections, entrusted with the collection and maintenance of the original material (in whatever format) on which responsible historical enquiry depended. In 1970, he took an initiative on Victoria's Professorial Board which was to lead in 1979 to the establishment of the University's own library school, and he worked to ensure that students there had sufficient understanding of older books that might come under their care.

Initially as an adjunct to teaching, but increasingly as a project in its own right, in 1962 he established the Wai-te-ata Press, naming it after the road in which it was situated but also relishing the link between the Maori *wai* (waters) and the Water Lane Press in Cambridge that had served as a bibliographical teaching press under the aegis of Gaskell in the 1950s. There was a further connection. In 1953, Cambridge University Press had

lent to the Water Lane Press an early nineteenth-century Stanhope iron hand-press.[6] Encouraged by Gaskell, he now persuaded the Press to agree to transfer its loan to Wellington. Don was proud of the Wai-te-ata Press's claims to historic authenticity: 'as antiquated and as obsolete as diligent inquiry and dust-disturbing visits to old newspaper offices and defunct printing shops can make it'.[7] It obliged students to make an effort of imagination; but any lessons could not easily be forgotten. Gradually, some machinery was added as well. As he scoured the local printers for type and other equipment, so the garages in which the Press was housed filled up. From them there emerged not just a series of student exercises, but also a distinguished list of authors including the poets Peter Bland, Alistair Campbell, Iain Lonie, and Bill Manhire. To this was added music publishing, including the work of Douglas Lilburn.

Informal and pressing invitations to leave New Zealand and settle in America, with a view to succeeding Fredson Bowers at Virginia, were flattering, but they held little appeal. The lessons of his thesis were taking a while to sink in amongst the scholarly community. In his great paper on 'Printers of the mind',[8] as well as in the irritation that can be sensed in his much later paper on what he called the 'spaced-out comps',[9] Don drew on his documented proof to demonstrate some further follies of more recent textual bibliography. In May 1963 he lectured at the Universities of Illinois, California (Los Angeles), and Virginia, and over the next few years developed an article of 75 pages based on work prepared for this tour. 'Printers of the mind: some notes on bibliographical theories and printing-house practices' took its text from T. S. Eliot: 'All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance.' While making due obeisance to Bowers, who insisted on bibliography's claims to be a scientific discipline, he reflected that it was more often the case in some recent work that so-called scientific proofs were in fact no more than conjecture, and that the norms alleged of editorial and printing-house conditions were so irrecoverably complex that bibliographical knowledge was still only partial and theoretical. In response to this, he demanded a 'new and rigorous scepticism'. Drawing on the

[6] James Mosley, 'The Stanhope press', in Horace Hart, *Charles Earl Stanhope and the Oxford University Press*, ed. James Mosley (Printing Historical Society, 1966), pp. xix–xxxiii.

[7] *The Wai-te-ata Press, 1962–1992* (Wellington, 1992). After Don's departure to Oxford the Press was less used, until it was revived for new purposes in 1995: see Sydney Shep, 'A new dawning; Wai-te-ata Press and letterpress printing in New Zealand', *The Book Collector*, 45 (1996), 457–75.

[8] *Studies in Bibliography*, 22 (1969), 1–75.

[9] 'Stretching a point: or, the case of the spaced-out comps', *Studies in Bibliography*, 37 (1984), 106–21.

evidence gathered in his work on the Cambridge records, but alluding also to other documentation from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, he demonstrated the fallacies of some prized current bibliographical theories: of workmen's output, of edition sizes, of the relation between composition and presswork. Most of all, the fact that concurrent production was normal in printing houses of all sizes (the Cambridge press frequently had two presses or fewer at work) meant that no book could be studied in isolation. It was a lesson requiring repetition.

In the face of the programme such a conclusion implied, it was small wonder that he wrote, 'I must confess to a feeling of mild despondency about the prospects for analytical bibliography.'

> Bibliography will simply have to prove itself adequate to conditions of far greater complexity than it has hitherto entertained. To do so, it will inevitably be obliged to use multiple and ingenious hypotheses, to move from induction to deduction, simply because a narrow range of theories is less likely to embrace the complex possibilities of organization within even a quite small printing house. A cynic might observe that the subject is already characterized by multiple and ingenious hypotheses, but too many of these have been allowed to harden into 'truth'. A franker acceptance of deductive procedures would bring a healthy critical spirit into the subject by insisting on the rigorous testing of hypotheses, and the prime method of falsification—adducing contrary particulars—would impose a sound curb on premature generalizations (pp. 60–1).

His emphasis on understanding the relationship between the archival record (where it existed) and the printed artefact extended to enquiries into the personnel of the printing trades. Ever since Edward Arber had published the registers of the Stationers' Company for the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, in 1875–94, the archives of the Company had gradually been brought before the public. Since, by its Charter of 1557, the Company was set at the centre of the English book trade, these records have a unique status. Don had relished being able to set names to tasks in the Cambridge printing-house. His earliest work as a graduate student had taken him into the archives of the Stationers' Company, and from them he had written one of his earliest articles, as well as *Stationers' Company apprentices, 1605–1640*, published by the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia in 1961. As a student, he had pointed out that, bleak though compositor analysis seemed, it was necessary to take matters further, to discover more about printers' social and educational backgrounds as well as their apprenticeship training.[10] To

[10] 'Compositor B's role in *The Merchant of Venice* Q2 (1619)', *Studies in Bibliography*, 12 (1959), 75–89, at p. 89.

him, bibliographical study always depended on the endless variety of human action. Or, as he put it in his presidential address to the Bibliographical Society some years later, 'The book as physical object put together by craftsmen—as we all know—is in fact alive with the human judgements of its makers.'[11] It was therefore natural that he should draw from the Stationers' Company a list of all apprentices, a sequence unique of its kind and providing the basis for what he hoped would one day become a prosopography of English printing and bookselling. Between 1961 and 1978 he saw published three volumes, surveying all the apprentices, their origins and their masters, between 1605 and 1800.

With the Stationers' Company, he extended into the eighteenth century, and he was always eager to refer to the archives of the London printers William Bowyer, father and son, which he delighted in seeing edited and published after many tribulations by Keith Maslen and John Lancaster in 1991. In an edition of a single surviving ledger of Charles Ackers, printer of the *London Magazine*, for 1732 to 1748, he worked with John Ross to place before the world further evidence of the procedures of a printing-house.[12]

His primary interests remained in the seventeenth century. A paper on 'The London book trade in 1668'[13] was written quickly, to make up for an article that had failed to arrive, but it was based on a characteristically painstaking survey of an extremely high percentage of surviving publications from that year. It presented a viewpoint that he had come to hold more and more firmly: that if the printing and publication of literature was to be understood, then this could only be achieved by considering the wider production, regardless of subject and format. Comprehensiveness and the urge to collect, displayed most obviously in national libraries, thus led not only to enumerative bibliography, but also to a social *raison d'être* for librarianship, and, with it, much of the artefactual diversity in printing sought by Don. In this way, the article also hinted at his developing awareness of the relationship between libraries and bibliography, a nexus he was to develop gradually into an argument for national strategy.

> Paradoxically, this diversity was both a strength and a weakness. The strength lay in its comprehensive responsibility to classify not merely literary documents but all books, to develop techniques for studying the elements common to

[11] 'The sociology of a text: orality, literacy and print in early New Zealand', *The Library*, 6th ser. 6 (1984), 333–65, at p. 335.

[12] *A ledger of Charles Ackers, printer of the London Magazine*, ed. D. F. McKenzie and J. C. Ross (Oxford Bibliographical Soc., 1968).

[13] *Words; Wai-te-ata Studies in Literature*, 4 (1974), 75–92.

> them, particularly type and paper, and to foster the study of regional printing and publishing as an essential means of determining the origin and date of the individual editions. The weakness lay in the innocent assumption that the locus of bibliography as subject was *the* book—any book—as a physical object. For this assumption has had two consequences. First, it accounts for our current failure to accept into the discipline artefacts which are not books but which serve a comparable function. I mean any message-bearing document. Manuscripts may qualify, although Greg felt obliged to argue the case; printed music is acceptable, if not quite central; prints and drawings, if not photographs, have been given a home; but magnetic sound and video tapes, gramophone records, films, and much archival material, are still perhaps regarded as embarrassingly extraneous . . . Paradoxically therefore, the emergence of bibliography as a coherent subject has been inhibited, not promoted, by its restriction to books, and by the very diversity of motive and interest which books serve (p. 76).

On this occasion, Don restricted himself to the output of the press—books, pamphlets, newsbooks, broadsides, and other ephemera. His calculations were confessedly founded on inadequate statistics; but the real extent of that inadequacy was immeasurable thanks to the losses of history.

He was to return to these themes later. They informed his early support for the *Eighteenth-century short-title catalogue* when it was being planned at the British Library in the 1970s under the management of Robin Alston. They also influenced his work on the early imprints programme in Australia and New Zealand, designed to survey holdings in both countries of books published before 1801: it was some measure of his leadership and energy that the only part of this project so far to appear in print in New Zealand surveyed the Wellington libraries, those closest to home.[14]

Meanwhile he turned to William Congreve, the editing of whose plays for Oxford University Press were to occupy much of his time for the remainder of his life. He succeeded to this task after the death of Herbert Davis in 1967, and was able to approach it by his own route. This was partly laid out in his Sandars lectures, delivered at Cambridge in spring 1976.[15] In these, he offered what he described as a tentative preliminary enquiry into the triple relationship of political history, the book trade and dramatic literature. After beginning with Ben Jonson, whose explicit

[14] *Early imprints in New Zealand libraries; a finding list of books printed before 1801 held in libraries in the Wellington region* (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, 1995).

[15] *The London book trade in the later seventeenth century*. These have not been published. Typescript copies are available in Cambridge University Library (850.b.188), the British Library (Ac.2660.m(28)), the Bodleian Library and elsewhere.

treatment of these subjects made him a ready witness, he moved in his second lecture away from the restrictions of bibliography as he saw it currently practised, and offered a phrase to which he was to return, 'the sociology of the text'. On the one hand he contested the 'reductive sterility of much that has ... been done in Greg's name'; and on the other he advanced the necessity of looking at texts not simply as written or printed, but as theatre, film, or other media. From this, he turned to a closer examination of the late seventeenth century, so departing from Greg's main areas of study in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, to suggest that in concern for proofreading, and the coalescence of printing and publishing to serve particular needs, there emerged new textual conditions. In particular, he drew attention to the partnership between Congreve and his publisher Jacob Tonson, and the ways in which Congreve's plays were given new form and new status by their joint determination to accord to the plays a classical status that not only offered a revision of earlier versions, but also set the plays in a European context. The collected edition of Congreve's *Works* (the title was warning enough), published in 1710, broke new ground in matters quite apart from its bowdlerisation. Where earlier it had been a widespread custom to issue such collections in folio, this was in octavo—a smaller format than the quarto in which the plays had first been published. It was a format modelled on editions of classical texts, designed to sit neatly on the shelves of gentlemen's libraries. Internally, typography, both in 1710 and further in the edition of 1719–20, was used to present entirely new emphases, by the use of centred speech-heads, italicisation and typographical ornament. These and cognate matters were developed in a paper offered at a conference at Wolfenbüttel, 'Typography and meaning: the case of William Congreve' which in its published form achieved wide acknowledgement and influence on the continent as well as in the English-speaking world.[16]

It was a topic that stretched back to the beginning of printing, but one that for English literature had its most obvious and explicit earlier parallels in Ben Jonson's works. The fact that both Jonson and Congreve turned to the design of the printed page to present in print what had been originally prepared to be spoken on stage, was of fundamental significance. In the conjunction of the two media, oral and printed, Don found the kind of textual cross-fertilization of which he wrote in 1974. In

[16] In Bernhard Fabian and Giles Barber (ed.), *Buch und Buchhandel in Europa im achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Hamburg, 1981), pp. 81–125.

drama, the issue was further enriched by such matters as staging, scenery, costume, and music. For all kinds of literature, the relationship of speech, manuscript, and print underlay its communication and publication. This extension of bibliographical activity was, for Don, one of honesty to scholarly responsibilities: he was ever the most moral of critics in this respect. The issues were as obvious in Milton's *Areopagitica* as in L'Estrange's censorship, and in 1990 he developed them in a further article, 'Speech—manuscript—print'.[17]

By the time, therefore, that he came to prepare his influential Panizzi lectures in 1985, many of his thoughts were already assembled.[18] The lectures had been founded anonymously by Mrs Catherine Devas, and were intended to provide for the new British Library a platform for bibliographical studies comparable to that provided by the Sandars and Lyell lectures for Cambridge and Oxford respectively. Don was an obvious choice as the first to give the lectures, and he deliberately chose a topic that would have general applications. Terminology was a conspicuous problem, and he persuaded himself only slowly of the validity of the phrase he had coined some years before and that now became part of his title, 'the sociology of texts'. The lectures, mostly written in Cambridge while he was on leave, puzzled over as he paced the corridors of the University Library, and as usual rewritten and revised up to the moment he went on stage, represent the *comble* of one part of his work. In them, he sought to come to terms with some of the more fashionable French theoreticians, of whose influence he was all too well aware. He also returned (using an example from the work of W. K. Wimsatt and M. C. Beardsley) to some of the follies of Anglo-American New Criticism—content apparently to work with inaccurate texts even where textual authority was the subject of study. His emphasis was on printed texts, but in the course of the lectures he referred to theatre, film, computer-based texts, maps, and the Australian landscape. If there was an historic base to his stress on the social aspects of texts, in the work of late-eighteenth-century philologists such as Wolf and Eichhorn, and some of his argu-

[17] Dave Oliphant and Robin Bradford (eds.), *New directions in textual studies* (Austin, Tex., 1990), pp. 87–109.

[18] *Bibliography and the sociology of texts* (1986). Reviews included those by Hugh Amory (*The Book Collector*, 36 (1987), 411–18); T. H. Howard-Hill (*The Library*, 6th ser. 10 (1988), 151–8); Jerome J. McGann (*London Review of Books*, 18 Feb. 1988, 20–1) and G. Thomas Tanselle in his 'Textual criticism and literary sociology', *Studies in Bibliography*, 44 (1991), 83–143, at pp. 87–99. The Panizzi lectures were translated into French (*La bibliographie et la sociologie des textes* (Paris, 1991)), with an introduction by Roger Chartier, and into Italian (*Bibliografia e sociologia dei testi* (Milan, 1999)) with an afterword by Renato Pasta as well as with (again) Chartier's essay.

ments followed on from those of Marshall McLuhan, he applied himself to them with a new finesse and new imagination.

But he began with a simple proposition, one that grew out of his earlier work and that considerably advanced the assumptions that had controlled bibliographical practice since the days of W. W. Greg.

> The principle I wish to suggest is simply this: bibliography is the discipline that studies texts as recorded forms, and the processes of their transmission, including their production and reception. So stated, it will not seem very surprising. What the word 'texts' also allows, however, is the extension of present practice to include all forms of texts, not merely books or Greg's signs on pieces of parchment or paper. It also frankly accepts that bibliographers should be concerned to show that forms effect meaning. Beyond that, it also allows us to describe not only the technical but also the social processes of their transmission. In those quite specific ways, it accounts for non-book texts, their physical forms, textual versions, technical transmission, institutional control, their perceived meanings, and social effects (p. 4).

The implications for literary criticism were far-reaching: that such activity had inescapably to take account of historical and textual bibliography, a discipline that had in the course of the twentieth century developed a quite independent momentum. Here, at last, was an expression of the kind of reconciliation between new bibliography and critical practice at which he had grasped in 1959. Of the three lectures, the first two were concerned with concepts of text: the first with what could be claimed to be authorially sanctioned; the second with the open-ended fate of a text, 'unstable, subject to a perpetual re-making by its readers, performance or audience'.

The lectures deliberately ranged widely; but in his presidential lecture delivered to the London Bibliographical Society in February 1983 Don had already found space to explore some of these questions in the context of New Zealand. In *Oral culture, literacy and print in early New Zealand; the Treaty of Waitangi*[19] he reflected on the conflict of understanding that underlay the negotiations and agreement of the treaty on which was based all subsequent relations between the Maori and the colonial power: between a people to whom literacy and its implications were totally unfamiliar, and an authority to whom the written and printed word were not merely long familiar, but were parts of its very foundation. In such circumstances, the spirit of the Treaty was, in his words, 'only recoverable if texts are regarded not simply as verbal constructs but as social products'.

[19] First published as 'The sociology of a text: orality, literacy and print in early New Zealand', *The Library*, 6th ser. 6 (1984), 333–65; republished under its new title by Victoria University Press and the Alexander Turnbull Library (Wellington, 1985).

In arriving at such a conclusion, and so contributing to a lively contemporary debate in New Zealand, he had re-examined not just the circumstances of the 'signing' of the treaty, but also available contemporary evidence of how early missionary printing had been received and understood. It incidentally brought out the best of Don's constant insistence that printing depended on the individuality of human responses as much as on mechanical processes; but when it was published in New Zealand the lecture was criticised both by Maori and by Pakeha historians, who were uncomfortable at the intrusion of a bibliographer into the subject.

Don was elected a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy in 1980. His work had always been divided between duties in New Zealand and research leave in Britain, with occasional forays into the United States. A further period of leave took him to Cambridge in 1982, and his marriage was breaking up. He was in England again in 1983, when he served as President of the London Bibliographical Society, and then again in 1984 and 1985. Partly in order to work on Congreve, in 1984 he reduced his appointment at Victoria to part-time. David Foxon had retired as Reader in Textual Criticism at Oxford in 1982, and the position was unfilled. It seemed only natural that in 1985 he should allow his name to go forward as Foxon's successor. He arrived in 1986, and was elected to a Fellowship at Pembroke College. He was among friends, some of them fellow-New Zealanders, but the Oxford landscape was no match for New Zealand, where he always kept a house. More cheerfully, he discovered amongst the research students ample opportunities to explore the implications of bibliographical principles for film and other twentieth-century media. Now (settled in Britain, and thus eligible under a different rule) elected Fellow of the British Academy, he soon afterwards joined the British Library Advisory Council as the Academy's representative. At Oxford, he delivered the Lyell lectures in 1988, on the seventeenth-century book trade.[20] More honours followed. He was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities and awarded the Marc Fitch gold medal for bibliography in 1988, and the gold medal of the Bibliographical Society in 1990. With his marriage in 1994 to Christine Ferdinand, Librarian and Fellow of Magdalen College, the broken pieces of his life could be seen firmly and happily reordered.

In his third Panizzi lecture, he had addressed the implications for bibliography as it was currently practised. It will already have become apparent that Don had a keen interest in the practices and responsibilities

[20] These have not been published, but Don used them as a quarry for his other work.

of librarianship. Indeed, early in his career attempts were made to recruit him to the staff of Cambridge University Library. Recalling that the lectures were named after the greatest of all nineteenth-century librarians, who had been responsible for establishing the British Museum Library as the unequalled international (not merely national) library, Don turned his attention to questions of national librarianship: not just of books, but of film and of electronic publication. At the time of writing, the archiving of both film and computer-based work lagged still further behind that for the more traditional forms of text than it does today. But Don also emphasised the difference between public responsibility and private convenience. 'I stress public because commercial considerations rarely bear upon the past with much responsibility to historic depth.'

> A principle of economy in the service of private interest renders all records vulnerable. Why keep them if the demand year by year diminishes to the point where they are seldom consulted and it becomes unprofitable to maintain the structures which house and service them? Even in the public realm, some texts are more equal than others, a principle of frequency of use is invoked, and policies of selective retention constantly advocated (pp. 62–3).

As he viewed the conflict developing in national libraries between the needs of existing collections and needs for and of new technologies, he argued for extentions to bibliographical understanding. Even the history of the book, to which he had devoted so much energy, suggested limitations that required both acknowledgement and accommodation. To acknowledge the instability of texts, whether because of their different media, their metamorphoses in publication, or reception, was also to acknowledge that 'histories of the book cannot tell the full story: they cannot fully account for our parallel use of manuscript even to the present day, the texts lost to history by their failure to survive, the import and export trade in books, the second-hand trade, the metatextual foundations of libraries, the number and nature of successive readings and partial readings, the concurrent production and circulation of graphic images, and formal and informal oral texts'. Electronic texts add to these issues, but they do not fundamentally transform them. Don reached tentatively at questions of the relationships between the digital worlds and the worlds of the codex. Had he lived, he would certainly have attempted to reconcile the two, despite environments of library management that gave him little comfort. Meanwhile, in his centenary address to the Bibliographical Society he rested content with contrasting what, notwithstanding his usual strictures, he termed the durability of books, a quality that 'ultimately secures the continuing future of our past', with the

'evanescence' of new forms. To him, this was 'the most critical problem for bibliography and any further history dependent upon its scholarship'.

For national libraries, forced to develop strategies of limitation, the most critical question seemed to him to be the ways by which forms of texts were being changed in order to be offered to readers, as paper-based stocks became unwieldy and expensive. The ubiquity of substitutes—paper, film or electronic—was not in itself cause to be ungrateful:

> But with every replication we have to balance the immediate social gains of availability and utility against the loss of the historical evidence every original contains—and our natural instinct, given our training, is to resist and regret the new prohibition against reading books with our fingers. Once we accept the premise that the forms themselves encode the history of their production, it follows that to abstract what we're told is their 'verbal information content' by transferring it to another medium is to contradict the very assumption that the artefact is the product of a distinctive complex of materials, labour, and mentality. . . . Any simulation (including re-presentation in a database—a copy of a copy) is an impoverishment, a theft of evidence, a denial of more exact and immediate visual and tactile ways of knowing.[21]

With issues concerning the future of the book in mind, and with the publication of the four-volume *Histoire de l'édition française* edited by Henri-Jean Martin and Roger Chartier (Paris, 1983–6) before him, Don turned his attention to a history of the book in Britain from Roman times to the end of the twentieth century. Such a project (by no means limited just to what had been produced in Britain) would both provide a survey of what was thus far known, and an opportunity to emphasise the place of the book at the centre of social activity.[22] It would also be a place in which to emphasise the necessity of accommodating different means of communication, including electronic media, to the history of the manufacture and use of manuscript and print. In 1988 a proposal for a seven-volume work, under the general editorship of Don, David McKitterick, and Ian Willison was accepted by Cambridge University Press: the volume covering the years *c.*1400 to 1557 appeared in 1999, edited by Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp. Gradually, too, Don watched other national histories being discussed, most rewardingly in New Zealand, where it was only natural that he should press vigorously for a similar project. His own work had concentrated on the earliest printing there, and on the late

[21] *'What's past is prologue'; the Bibliographical Society and history of the book* (Bibliographical Soc., 1993), p. 24.

[22] 'History of the book', in Peter Davison (ed.), *The book encompassed; studies in twentieth-century bibliography* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 290–301.

nineteenth-century printer Robert Coupland Harding, whose vision and international frame of reference made him naturally attractive to Don. Harding formed the subject of a lecture delivered in honour of Keith Maslen in Melbourne in 1991.[23] As in some other countries, a coherent single history for New Zealand proved impracticable. Instead, within an astonishingly short time, contributors were assembled for a collection of essays on many aspects of the subject, published at Wellington in 1997.[24] Don viewed the term used in its title, 'print culture', with some unease, mainly because it seemed to him to avoid the complexities of the relationships of print to other media. But his admiration was clear for the energy that had produced something so comprehensive, even if rather different from that for which he had argued.

In 1996 he retired from Oxford, though it was difficult to see any difference to the pace of his life as he continued to write, attend meetings in London, support his students with innumerable references, and push forward with the two major projects, his edition of Congreve and the Cambridge *History of the book in Britain*. In spring 1997 he gave the Clark lectures at Cambridge, using the opportunity to present Congreve as a person of integrity in two senses: on account of the coherence of his work over about forty years, and secondly on account of 'the honesty and humanity of the values which, at least to my mind, inform it'.[25] The lectures offered a foretaste of matter to be included in the Oxford edition. They also represent the closest Don came to reconciling critical and editorial values, the puzzle he had set himself as a research student. But his friends, and he, knew that he was asking too much of his body, even after major heart surgery. As he put it more than once, as he threw himself into new arguments, 'The trouble is that I cannot help getting involved': for Don, that meant more energy than many can muster even in full health. In the event, the task of completing Congreve had to pass after his death to others. The seventeenth-century volume of the history of the book, edited jointly with John Barnard of Leeds University, will appear imminently, edited now also by Maureen Bell. Don died of heart failure on

[23] 'Robert Coupland Harding on design in typography', in R. Harvey, W. Kirsop, and B. J. McMullin (eds.), *An index of civilisation; studies of printing and publishing history in honour of Keith Maslen* (Clayton, Vic., 1993), pp. 187–205.

[24] Penny Griffith, Ross Harvey, and Keith Maslen (eds), *Book & print in New Zealand; a guide to print culture in Aotearoa* (Wellington, 1997).

[25] *The integrity of William Congreve* (1997). This is unpublished, but copies are in the Bodleian Library (shelf-mark M97.C01782) and in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge.

22 March 1999 in the Taylorian Library. Characteristically, he was pursuing a query for someone else at the time.

Don's restless upbringing left its mark, and though the journey between England and New Zealand was hardly to be faced with relish, his taste for travel did not diminish with age. In the early years, the long sea voyage allowed time for uninterrupted work. Latterly, even the New Zealand journey could be lightened by a pause in California, to visit the Los Angeles libraries or Christine's family. He visited New Zealand for the last time in January 1999, to deal with family obligations. In his last few months, Picasso's ceramics at the Royal Academy and a visit to the Mark Rothko exhibition in Paris each refreshed his energies and enthusiasms. A few months before that, a visit to an all but forgotten painting of Congreve in Leuven[26] combined his delight in the visual arts and his love of drama. On another occasion, he sent an excited postcard announcing that he had at last not only seen the eighteenth-century theatre at Drottningholm, but had actually had a chance to work the thunder machine there as well. His enjoyment of life in such circumstances, and in the last few years particularly in the company of Christine, was almost tangible.

His need to be in England for the sake of its libraries, its archives, and the historic wealth on which he worked was always in conflict with his love of his own country. Once on one side of the world, he ached to be on the other. It was only in his last years that he found expression for his feelings:

> Thy firmness draws my circle just,
> And makes me end where I begunne.

He quoted Donne's words when in 1997 he received an honorary doctorate from Victoria University. It was a distinction that he prized above all others: not simply because it recognised his contributions to knowledge, and to the life of New Zealand and Wellington in particular, but because it implicitly acknowledged the ways in which he had sought to apply the gains of bibliographical and critical enquiry to wider literary, historical and social issues. Though he died in Oxford, his ashes were scattered on the sea off the little North Island holiday settlement of Paekakariki, as he wished.

DAVID McKITTERICK
Fellow of the Academy

[26] 'Richard van Bleeck's portrait of William Congreve as contemplative (1715)', *Review of English Studies*, NS 51 (2001), 41–61.

Note. In preparing this, I have been greatly helped by the existence of a number of memoirs by his friends, in particular Keith Maslen, 'Donald Francis McKenzie, 1932 [*sic*]–1999', *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin*, 23 (1999), 3–10; Kathleen Coleridge, 'Donald Francis McKenzie, born 5 June 1931, died 22 March 1999', *New Zealand Libraries*, 49 (1) (1999), 24–7; Nicolas Barker, in *The Book Collector*, 48 (1999), 445–50; Harold Love, 'The intellectual heritage of Donald Francis McKenzie', *The Library*, 7th ser. 2 (2001), 266–80. The obituary notice in *The Independent*, 25 March 1999, was reprinted with various alterations in the *Turnbull Library Record*, 32 (1999), 5–9 and in *The Library*, 7th ser. 1 (2000), 79–81. I am also grateful for help of various kinds to Christine Ferdinand, Hugh Amory, John Barnard, Kathleen Coleridge, Douglas Gray, Penny Griffith, Harold Love, Matthew McKenzie, Keith Maslen, Don Peebles, Ian Willison, Wallace Kirsop, and my wife Rosamond. For a selective bibliography of his work, see D. F. McKenzie, *Printers of the mind and other essays*, ed. Peter McDonald and Michael Suarez (University of Massachusetts Press, 2002).