RED Letter

The Newsletter of the Reading Experience Database

SPRING 2005
Edited by Mary Hammond

WELCOME to the latest issue of RED letter.

There have been some changes in personnel since the last issue back in 2001, but the Open University, which has always hosted the database on its mainframe and largely superintended its development through the appointment of various research fellows, continues to maintain and support it jointly with colleagues at the University of Reading. The project's co-founders, Professor Simon Eliot at Reading and Professor Bob Owens at the OU, are still very much in evidence as Project Directors. Dr Stephen Colclough, who was instrumental in entering most of RED's current content, has moved to the University of Reading, but maintains his commitment to the project. Dr Caroline Sumpter, whose contributions to RED's content were also invaluable during her year at the OU, has moved to Queens's University, Belfast, but is also continuing her connection with the project. In 2003 I was appointed to a full-time lectureship in Book History at the OU, and joined the RED team.

After a period of relative inactivity, we are pleased to report that RED is gearing up for a new phase of development. We have recently put in place a management team which oversees development and quality control, and assembled an international Advisory Board which will ensure RED's continued usefulness to the research community (see <u>The RED team</u> link). We are advertising RED internationally via conferences and websites, and working hard to make the online contribution forms more user-friendly in order to encourage participation by ever-greater numbers of external researchers. In future, online forms will contain copyright advice and enable contributors to take as long as they need to input their information in a single session. All entries will also be accompanied by the names of their contributors as part of our rigorous checking procedures, designed to ensure that all the data is accurate and traceable, and that all the hard work of our contributors is fully acknowledged.

We also hope to be making some important technical changes, resources permitting. This will include exporting data from Microsoft ACCESS to MySQL running a Linux (Redhat) operating system and Apache webserver in preparation for the 'live' launch. Data is backed up on a weekly (differential) and monthly (full) basis, and will eventually also be deposited annually with the AHDS to ensure absolute security. Thanks to your continued support, and to the hard work of a number of dedicated researchers, RED now has over 6,000 entries. This current new phase will, we hope, result in a live, searchable database being placed on the www as early as the end of 2006. Please keep the data coming!

In future we will be maintaining contact with our mailing list electronically. If you would like to receive regular updates including projected timings for a 'live' version, please send an email to Dr Mary Hammond at the Open University on m.e.hammond@open.ac.uk

Forthcoming Events and Calls for papers

The Third International Conference on the Book, September 11-13 2005, Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK.

http://b05.cgpublisher.com/index.html

Deadline: March 31 2005

The Reading Problem: A History of Reading Workshop
27 & 28 July 2005, Institute of English Studies, Senate House, University of London. Organised by the University of Reading, the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, King's College, London and the IES
Contact: s.m.colclough@reading.ac.uk , ian.r.henderson@kcl.ac.uk or ies@sas.ac.uk

Deadline: May 16th 2005

Readers and Reading: Seminars in Book History and Bibliography, Institute of English Studies, Senate House, University of London. Held fortnightly on Monday evenings in term-time from 10th October 2005 to 13th March 2006. Organised by the Open University and the IES. Programme to be confirmed.

If you would like to give a paper at this series, please contact Dr Mary Hammond m.e.hammond@open.ac.uk

If you would like to advertise your conference, colloquium or call for papers here, or to add or review a recent book on reading, contact Dr Mary Hammond (m.e.hammond@open.ac.uk)

Recent publications on the history and practice of reading

William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)

Candy Gunther Brown, *The Word in the World: Evangelical Writing, Publishing and Reading in America 1789-1880* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004)