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## In Memoriam: Trevor Howard-Hill, 17 October 1933-1 June 2011

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In Memoriam: Trevor Howard-Hill  
October 17, 1933-June 1, 2011  
Editor of *PBSA*, 1994-2011

By William Baker and Patrick Scott

Trevor Howard-Hill, editor of *PBSA* since 1994, died of a heart-attack at his home in Columbia, South Carolina, on June 1, 2011. For six decades, Trevor had been known in person and through his published work to scholars around the world, as a pioneer in literary computing, as an expert on dramatic manuscripts of the Shakespearean period, as a tenacious and sceptical combatant in the rapidly-changing world of editorial theory, and as a widely-respected scholar in the emerging field of book history.

Beginning in 1959, he planned the work by which he is best known, the multi-volume *Index to British Literary Bibliography*, projected to take over thirty years to complete. The first volumes, published by Oxford in 1969, immediately became standard research tools; the final two massive volumes on *The British Book Trade 1475-1890*, with over 1700 pages supplemented by two CDs, were triumphantly published, three publishers and several title changes later, in 2009, under the joint aegis of the British Library, the (London) Bibliographical Society, and the Bibliographical Society of America.

Trevor Howard Hill was born on October 17, 1933, in Lower Hutt, near Wellington and educated in Wellington, New Zealand, son of Rowland Henry Hill, a policeman, and Dulcie Helena (Howard) Hill. When Trevor left school, he was in his own words "almost unthinkingly drawn to book-related studies," and he went to work "as a general roustabout and cleaner with the local newspaper." Within a year of moving on to become a student at the local Victoria University, he was appointed editor of the student newspaper.

He gained his BA in 1955, MA 1957, and PhD 1960, all from Victoria University, working with the textual editor I. A. Gordon and with his own near-contemporary, Don McKenzie. His PhD was on a subject that was to preoccupy him for the rest of his life, "Ralph Crane and spelling analysis." As if in warning of what was to come, it was subtitled "a preparatory study of his life, spelling and scribal habits." This formed the foundation for Trevor's first important paper in *The Library* (1963), for a monograph on Crane, and for other essays including the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* Crane entry.

Following his PhD, Trevor did a library diploma, focusing on cataloguing "as a form of bibliographical description," he remarked, because he thought himself "undisciplined and unmethodical." From 1961 to 1963, he became head of cataloguing for the great Alexander Turnbull library, retaining for the rest of his life the then-obligatory librarian's italic hand. He also produced his first separate publication, *Dutch Printed Books in the Alexander Turnbull Library* (1963).

His Shakespeare research had required painstaking hand-analysis of variant spellings, and to go further he needed computer access he could not get in Wellington. Inspired by the work of the distinguished Oxford Shakespearean Alice Walker (subsequently he wrote a splendid tribute to her in *Twentieth-Century British Book Collectors and Bibliographers*, 1999) and of Charlton B. Hinman in Kansas, he moved to Britain in 1964, first as a librarian at the Shakespeare Institute in Birmingham, and then from 1965 to 1970 as a research fellow in literary computing in Oxford. Here he produced the 37-volume series of Oxford Shakespeare Concordances (1969-73), the basis for his later book on *Literary Concordances* (1979).

Supervised by Alice Walker, he also wrote a second doctoral thesis, his influential study *Ralph Crane and Some Shakespeare First Folio Comedies* (Oxford DPhil, 1971), published by the University Press of Virginia in 1972. Simultaneously, he completed the first two volumes of his great life-work, the *Index to British Literary Bibliography* (1969-2009), initially conceived while he was at the Turnbull. One of us vividly recalls, in a literary research methods course at a British redbrick university in the late 60s, being alerted to Trevor's work, as terrifyingly raising standards for future bibliographical researchers. His move in 1970 to University College, Swansea, was obviously just a stepping-stone.

In 1972, Trevor was recruited to join an ambitious group of textual and editorial scholars in the United States, at the University of South Carolina, which would remain his scholarly base for the rest of his life. He went back to Britain every year, often for extended periods, both for research and to keep contact with his daughters, and in recent years he also frequently returned to New Zealand, to lecture and to revive earlier friendships. He was duly promoted to full professor in 1977, and as a former shop steward for the sheep-shearing union in New Zealand took a full part in faculty governance including a brief stint as chair of the English Department (1990-1991). In part to avoid difficulties over the sheep-shearers' early communist links, he never sought US citizenship. Professional recognition came with an NEH fellowship (1979) and a Guggenheim (1989), and other fellowships and awards. In 1990 he was named C. Wallace Martin Professor of English, a position he held until his retirement from the university's English Department in 1999.

On retirement, he moved to an office in the university library, from which he continued to edit the quarterly issues of *PBSA*. During his sixteen years as editor, he maintained and increased the high quality of contributions, no mean achievement. He continued the tradition of publishing extended reviews from recognized experts, and he himself contributed both occasional reviews and regular shorter notices. As editor, he had an extensive range of contacts all over the world, knowing exactly to whom he could turn for specialized advice. An editor is to some extent dependent on the articles submitted, but Trevor strove within this limitation to include in each issue and volume articles focused on a variety of national literatures, historic periods, and scholarly approaches. He encouraged younger scholars to submit, attended in person many conferences in order to make contacts and to ascertain whether there was the potential for outstanding copy, and took considerable pains to make constructive suggestions about how submissions

could be improved. His editing was scrupulous, and his extensive copy-editing experience shown in the marked up proofs he sent to contributors. One sign that he left the journal in robust health is the fact that, when he died, he had articles in hand for the next two years' issues and reviews ready for a year.

Trevor's central commitment remained his scholarship. The 1980s were turbulent times in Shakespearean studies, even in textual editing. Trevor was almost unique in his range of knowledge of the Shakespearean texts themselves, of the printing practices that transmitted them, and of contemporary dramatic manuscripts and their conventions. Fully engaging with newer textual-editorial theories, he thought many recent editors shirked their task: "an editor should stride the world like Tamburlaine," he wrote once in exasperation, "not shilly-shally like Hamlet."

Prolific, his work appeared in all the major bibliographical journals. For the Malone Society, he edited the Fletcher-Massinger tragedy *Sir John van Olden Barnavelt* (1980) and Middleton's *A Game of Chess* (1990), with a scholarly modern spelling edition of the latter for the Revels Series (1993) and a separate edition of the Bridgewater manuscript (1993); notably all these editions rested on manuscript sources. His January 1989 address to the Bibliographical Society, subsequently published in its journal *The Library* under the title "Modern Textual Theories and the Editing of Plays," makes wise strictures on the still complex issues of the treatment of "accidentals" and "playwright's intentions" and remains pertinent in an age of parallel texts where many editors seem uncomfortable analyzing point by point the basis of textual authority in the sources they reprint.

He was a regular friendly reassuring presence at Shakespearean and bibliographical conferences all over the world, encouraging and befriending younger scholars, and was active in the Bibliographical Society of America, SHARP, the Printing History Society, the Renaissance Society of America, and the Southeast Renaissance Conference (for which for several years he co-edited the annual *Renaissance Papers*). He had attended every World Shakespeare Congress since its founding in 1971. The paper he wrote for this year's congress, in Prague, which a colleague will present, concludes hauntingly:

Now, all passion spent, my last scholarly paper completed, I can say with Crane himself from his elegiac preface to the second edition of *The Workes of Mercy* in 1625:

Now *young ones* raigne,  
Whilst I (too old to cry about the street  
Worke for a Writer) no *Employment meet*,  
But all dismayed, and dis-ioyfull sit  
As one had neither *Pen*, nor *Hand*, nor *Wit*:

What distinguishes Trevor's bibliographical work is not only its daunting scale, but the quality of the data he provided. The bibliographical history of his *magnum opus* the great *Index to British Literary Bibliography* is complex because its publication history was complex, as publishers became reluctant to continue enumerative bibliographies on such a mammoth scale in printed form. Only a scholar of Trevor's tenacity could have carried

his vision through to completion. The original series of volumes, published by Oxford, started in 1969 and continued through 1999; this was complemented by Trevor's *British Book Trade Dissertations to 1980* (1998) and a revised edition of his original second volume *Shakespearian Bibliography and Textual Criticism*, both published by Summertown Books of Signal Mountain, Tennessee. The two final volumes on the British book trade were published by the British Library and Oak Knoll. Trevor insisted on seeing for himself every item that he included, often traveling to small town libraries in Britain to hunt elusive items, scan their shelves, and pore through long-neglected local periodicals. The final two volumes alone contain 24,567 individual entries. By the conclusion of the project, Trevor calculated he had visited during a ten-year period over 300 hundred libraries, especially in Britain, some in very remote places. Many of these libraries have now been closed.

A lover of opera, especially of Verdi, a *bon vivant*, and cat lover, over 6 feet 2 in height, he had the appearance of a New Zealand rugby player: it was an incongruous sight to see such a well-built man bent over the smallest possible of laptops. He married twice, but both marriages were dissolved. He is survived by three adult children, five grandchildren, and his partner, Joy Gamby of New Zealand.

Colleagues found him a generous friend, but he is known, and will continue to be known, to far more people through his scholarship. He wrote recently of the great bibliographer W. W. Greg: "I never met Greg. I was 26 and still in New Zealand when he died in 1959. But I have known him by his works for fifty years; was there a better way?"

[Wednesday June 8, 2011; 1773 words]