



# SHARP

The Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing

## 25 Years in 25 Members

As part of our 25th anniversary celebrations, we invited 25 members of SHARP to serve as an ‘ambassador’ for a specific year of our Society’s history, based for the most part on either the year they joined the Society or first spoke at a SHARP conference. Each was asked to provide some thoughts and memories about their experience of SHARP in their language of choice. Collectively, these ambassadors reflect the richness of our interests and diversity as a Society.

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- Alexis Weedon (1993)
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- Ann Steiner (2003)
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- Siobhan McMenemy (2007)
- Melanie Ramdarshan Bold (2008)
- Benito Rial Costas (2009)
- Loretta De Franceschi (2010)
- Dagmar Riedel (2011)
- Helen Sonner (2012)
- SeoKyung Han (2013)
- Marina Garone Gravier (2014)
- Henning Hansen (2015)
- LE Hong Phuoc (2016)

### Patrick Leary (1992)



I have so many wonderful memories of SHARP. Talking over the possibilities with Jonathan and Simon in 1991 at the Santa Cruz meeting where they first proposed the idea. Going online with SHARP-L in 1992, and with SHARP Web a couple of years later. That first conference, at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York, and how delighted we were to have attracted 130 scholars to it. Accepting the award in '99 on behalf of Ezra and Jonathan for *Book History*, which had been voted “best new journal” by the Council of Editors of Learned Journals (CELJ). There was always more organizational and promotional work to be done, always the excitement of new recruits, and sometimes the clash of differing viewpoints. Was SHARP too wildly theoretical for the community of rare book bibliographers or, as others suggested, was it mired in an unreflective empiricism that

overlooked important new approaches? Should SHARP remain focused on its Anglophone beginnings or seek a much broader and more global role? Was SHARP paying enough attention to the newest thinking on the expanding universe of digital texts? There was room for debate on points like these and many others, and the debates went on. And everywhere there was email, in an ever-flowing stream, not only among all of us on SHARP-L but also administratively, among myself and Jonathan and Simon and other early stalwarts, as we all worked to keep SHARP growing and moving forward.

Sights and sounds from all the wonderful conferences that came after that first one will never leave me. Listening, rapt, at Columbia's library as the legendary Bob Giroux of Farrar, Straus, & Giroux regaled us with anecdotes of Jack Kerouac and other authors he had known. In Worcester, hearing for the first time William St. Clair's astounding work on Romantic publishing, and later leading a caravan consisting of David Finkelstein, Toni Johnson-Woods, and others to a renowned fried-clam palace on the Massachusetts shore. Meeting amidst all the fabulous Gutenberg anniversary celebrations in Mainz. Chatting about Gwen Raverat with the witty and all-knowing Elisabeth Leedham-Green at Cambridge. Visiting the Van Gogh Museum and staring, mouth agape, at the actual wood-engraved pages from illustrated British periodicals that the painter had tacked up in his rooms for inspiration. Riding a bus late one evening with Jim West and hearing him describe, in that inimitable Tidewater accent, the discovery of the young F. Scott Fitzgerald's love letters to Ginevra King. Finding myself among other SHARPists at high table in Magdalen College, Oxford, with a genially beaming Colin Dexter. And above all, the vivid memories of so many stirring, intriguing, and sometimes unsettling talks about such a huge range of SHARPist topics, and the innumerable discussions that followed.

*Patrick Leary (Ph.D., History, Indiana), assisted at the creation of SHARP in 1991-92, and has served in several capacities over the years, including the creation and management of SHARP's online presence through its discussion list and website.*

## Alexis Weedon (1993)



The SHARP conference was in New York that year. I had just got a job at the University of Luton and was completing my Post Doc on the History of the Book in Britain project, following Christine Ferdinand, Maureen Bell and Megan L. Benton. I gave a presentation on OHP slides of costs of production over the 19th century to a very kind audience. It was my first experience of what is, I believe, characteristic of SHARP members SHARP-L: always willing to listen and incredibly generous with their scholarship.

*Book History*, *SHARP News* and the website have provided new venues for many ideas and it is good to see this continuing to develop.

Publishing History was my first 'home' for articles from the project. Somethings have taken longer to mature into publication: I note in my career objectives for 1993-4 I had received the microfilm of the Kidderminster Municipal Library 1855-1856 issue book – the project of analyzing and interpreting the reading practices of the working class men who used it was taken

on by Teresa Gerrard as part of her PhD and we subsequently developed it for *Library and Information History* (2013).

Simon Eliot proposed, as a principle, that if you can you should publish work which is helpful to other colleagues as it develops the field as a whole. It was a comment made in relation to the work I had done locating British publishers and printers archives for the HoBB project and lead Michael Bott and I to publish the listing initially in print in 1993. It was I believe useful to some people early on – before google!

Two other projects are mentioned in my diary for the year: The Reading Experience Database was in its infancy. Volunteer readers submitted paper forms which I then laboriously keyed into my BRS database. Those were pre-web days, so I programmed a front-end so the records could be input on a form enabling secretarial support from the Open University and British Library to take over this task. There was great the excitement when the OU computing team turned this into the first web form! Today RED currently has over 30,000 entries.

Significantly for me 1993 was also the year Julia Knight and I write the proposal for a new journal called *Convergence: The Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*. Little did I know how significant it would be for my career and I expect I would have been horrified to think I would still be editing the journal 23 years later. I am delighted to say that we have provided a venue for quite a few SHARPists work on new digital forms of the book, authorship and e-reading. Long may it continue to do so.

*Alexis Weedon is Professor of Publishing at the University of Bedfordshire and UNESCO chairholder in new media forms of the book*

## Barbara Hochman (1994)



In 1994, when I attended my first SHARP conference, “the author” was widely presumed to be dead for the purposes of literary study. The idea of the reader was gaining attention, but some attacked it as a text-based theoretical construct, others for legitimizing the idiosyncrasy of individual response. I had written several papers about the representation of authors and readers in late-nineteenth-century fiction, and was trying to understand not only how American authors imagined their audience, but also how 19<sup>th</sup>-century readers actually read. As I groped my way toward the idea of reading as a social practice, seeking ways to reconstruct reading habits of the past, I felt that none of the professional associations to which I belonged addressed these issues with consistency or nuance.

Once I became aware of SHARP’s existence, I realized that this new organization could help fill a glaring gap in the methodology of cultural studies by providing a historical perspective on the intimate connections between authorship, publishing, and reading. The discussions that I heard at SHARP in 1994, the responses that greeted my own paper, and the professional friendships that I began to form there, all helped me refine the project that would become [\*Getting at the Author: Reimagining Books and Reading in the Age of American Realism\*](#). I’ve attended many SHARP

conferences in the interim and there has been a strong book-history component in nearly everything I've subsequently written. In 2012 I was enormously gratified to be awarded the DeLong Book History prize for [\*Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Reading Revolution\*](#).

SHARP has changed a great deal over the years. Although the small scale of the early conferences had some benefits that bigger conferences necessarily lack, SHARP has remained a forum where new developments in book history are vetted by an engaged and generous audience. SHARP's growing membership, its annual and regional conferences, all testify to the vitality and international appeal of book history, and predict a rich future for both the field and its flagship organization.

*Barbara Hochman, Professor Emerita at Ben-Gurion University in Israel, has published widely on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>– century American fiction, reading practices, and interpretive conventions.*

## Alistair McCleery (1995)



It's an old man's privilege to cast his mind back and tell a story from the very beginning. I certainly feel old now, given both the 25th anniversary this year of SHARP and the relative youth and energy of those who now attend its conferences, including some who were my own graduate students. However, back we go even further to 1985 when I participated in the Salzburg Seminar number 242, 'New Perspectives on Contemporary American Literature', with a youthful and energetic brain filled with the newly read *Flawed Texts and Verbal Icons: Literary Authority in American Fiction* (1984) by Hershel Parker and the historiographical writings of Hayden White. I was encouraged in Salzburg by the late (and generous and modest) Walt Litz to run with these ideas and apply them to our mutual interest in Joyce's *Ulysses*. Not that I needed much encouragement: for as I wrote in a piece for *SHARP News*, 8/2, in 1999, if I went back even, even further to the 1970s, and growing up and reading in Northern Ireland, 'the dryness, the emphasis upon the autonomous work of art, of the New Criticism and its successors seemed effete and precious... Traditional bibliography seemed to be just as unsatisfactory: both because of its lack of contextual awareness and its failure to interact with critical reading.'

What the foundation of SHARP did then was to provide the company of others who were also thinking this way and, like me, taking a rather inchoate approach to the book, drawing on an eclectic range of sources. (I still have my copy of Robert Escarpit's *Sociologie de la littérature* in the 'Que sais-je' series, bought in Paris in 1982.) The coming of the annual SHARP conference to Edinburgh in 1995 consolidated that sense of fellowship and of common endeavour in developing Book History within the academy. SHARP has always welcomed a range of scholars and researchers within its fold and this is particularly true for those like me whose interests run from the near past to the immediate present. Yet the scale of SHARP has been manageable throughout, both in the early days of single, portmanteau annual conferences to the later, beneficial adoption of particular themes for a range of geographically spread venues.

It's also an old man's privilege to be selective in his remembering: of the hospitality shown by colleagues in Cape Town – particularly the quest for the conference banquet wine that led

through numerous wineries and tastings in the company of the knowledgeable, and competitive, John Gouws and Peter Eggert – and in Wellington – where I slept through an earthquake (smallish) and discovered bacon and onion muffins (biggish) – and in Toronto, Lyons and many other places; of the camaraderie of these conferences and friendships formed there that have lasted to this day. Not that this piece is an obituary of SHARP (or of me); it's a commemoration of all SHARP has done but also a mark of its potential to continue to do all this and more in the next 25 years.

*Professor Alistair McCleery, Director of the Scottish Centre for the Book at Edinburgh Napier University, has written widely (over many years) on publishing in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.*

## Ellen Gruber Garvey (1996)



I first got to know SHARP around 1996 through the SHARP-L discussion list, where in 1996 I found fascinating discussions of, among other things, the tactile experience of reading books and librarians vs. the FBI. This was at the height of a particularly arid moment in my field of literature, and SHARPists' concern with the material book and the work involved in publishing it felt like home. Since then, many in literary studies fruitfully entered print culture studies, and the approaches have enriched one another.

The SHARP-L list archive maps the group's capacious concerns. Maybe sometimes too capacious – I think I switched to receiving the postings in daily digest form after my inbox was beset by an extended volley about the significance of green ink. The ongoing conversation on the list has extended my thinking and introduced me to treasured colleagues. I started meeting them in person at my first SHARP conference in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1996, and in the nine SHARP conferences I've had the pleasure of attending since.

I missed the 1997 SHARP conference in Cambridge, UK. I was in Costa Rica trying to learn Spanish, and occasionally heading over to an internet café to check email. I logged in to discover an excited message from a friend who'd heard the announcement at the conference that my first book, *The Adman in the Parlor: Magazines and the Gendering of Consumer Culture* had won the first SHARP book award. It was not yet named the George A. and Jean S. DeLong prize, but just the prize for the best book of the year ON the history of the book. The potential for a preposition change misrepresenting that as the best book IN the history of the book occasioned much hilarity at my university. I'm glad for the sake of subsequent recipients that the prize has its new name. Later, when I went on to become one of the judges for the prize, I was grateful that the DeLongs were generous and foresighted enough to endow it. By then, there were many more books on history of the book, and reading through a three-year supply offered a rich education in the field, greatly expanded from the conversational snippets on SHARP-L.

*Ellen Gruber Garvey is the author of Writing with Scissors: American Scrapbooks from the Civil War to the Harlem Renaissance. She is an English professor at New Jersey City University.*

## Abhijit Gupta (1997)



My first SHARP conference was at Cambridge 1997, just six months after I had defended my doctoral thesis in the same city. For much of my preceding three years, I did not even know that a discipline such as book history existed, and it was only half-way through my PhD I realized that I had been speaking BH without knowing it. It was a happy coincidence that SHARP was taking place in Cambridge that year, since it also enabled to receive my degree in person. My memories of that conference are very hazy, but I remember the one at Mainz four years later much more clearly. Who can forget the Gutenberg Museum and the Bibles on display?

Back in India, BH was taking baby steps in universities and we held the first conference in 2002. Four years later, thanks chiefly to the enthusiasm of Ian Willison, we were able to hold a SHARP-sponsored three-day conference at Jadavpur University. During this time, I was able to go to a SHARP conference only once, in picturesque Lyon of the two rivers, but with greater regularity from Toronto in 2009. By then, I had served on the SHARP board of directors as well as on the editorial board for *Book History*. For a long time, I was the only representative from South Asia, which was sometimes frustrating. I felt then that SHARP had to do more to attract more members from outside the Anglo-American academy. SHARP itself was acutely aware of this and it is heartening that it has recently been able to take decisive steps in that direction.

But above everything, it is the warmth and collegiality of SHARP members that I have most come to cherish. This is most evident in the SHARP listserv where the depth and range of scholarship is only matched by the generosity of the participants in sharing it. The same sense of community is on display at the annual conferences, and the caravanserai of BH events all through the year. As SHARP's scope and remit increases, I hope that it will continue to be as hospitable and welcoming to young scholars as it was to me, twenty year ago.

*Abhijit Gupta is Professor and Head of the Department of English, Jadavpur University, and Director, Jadavpur University Press*

## DeNel Rehberg Sedo (1998)



During my PhD coursework at Simon Fraser University, I enrolled in an elective called History of Publishing. The teacher, Valerie Frith, was not only a knowledgeable book historian, she was also resourceful and encouraging. She prodded me to submit a paper proposal for the 1998 SHARP Conference in Vancouver. Had that paper, "A Glimpse at Reading Groups: Looking at Reading in a Societal Context" not been accepted, it's hard to say which way the swinging doors of my career might have swung.

As I reflect on that conference program, I recognize names of those who supported me early in my career, and many who have become respected colleagues. Fellow graduate students and I

were welcomed at that and future annual meetings and on SHARP-L. We were encouraged to speak our minds and share our research. Scholars wiser than us freely gave welcomed advice.

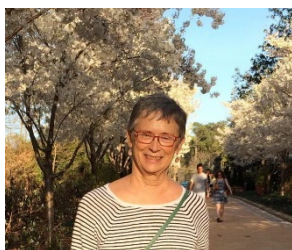
The learned support, intellectual rigour and respect of disciplinary differences of SHARP members—in addition to their ability to find good drinking and eating holes—has been the benchmark I have for other scholarly associations. I remember the approachability of Jonathan Rose, Simon Eliot and Beth Luey at that first conference, and am forever appreciative of Barbara Hochman’s later advice after a paper I gave that greatly influenced my thesis outcome. Fiona Black, Mary Lu MacDonald, and Bertrum MacDonald were my “Welcome Wagon” as I moved homes and jobs across the country from Vancouver to Halifax. Jenny Hartley became an academic mentor to me, and my edited collection would have been flat without her contribution. After hearing one of my papers, Alexis Weedon invited me to contribute to *Convergence*, and helped me to not only publish my first academic paper with her fine editing skills, but her astute questions also opened a new area of online reading response scholarship.

As a Public Affairs officer in the early 2000s, I learned what it was like to work with a group of passionate scholars who believe in what Leslie Howsam calls an “interdiscipline” (approach) to the History of the Book and how important it is to keep the generous intellectual spirit that is the hallmark of SHARP.

While it is important to reflect on the impact SHARP members have had on one’s career, I think it equally important to recognize and acknowledge that this association attracts *really great* people who make excellent friends. Happy 25<sup>th</sup> SHARP.

*DeNel Rehberg Sedo is a Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at Mount Saint Vincent University and has an insatiable interest in readers and their practices in this and past centuries.*

## Janice Radway (1999)



My connection to SHARP was first fostered by Professor Wayne Wiegand, the noted book history scholar and specialist on the history of libraries and reading, when he asked me to give a keynote address to the SHARP conference scheduled to meet in Madison, Wisconsin. I have been grateful to him ever since for enabling and encouraging my connections with a whole network of scholars doing consequential research in the fields of book history more generally, on the history, sociology, and anthropology of reading, and, in particular, on the history of libraries and their role in the life of readers. Indeed it was at this conference where I was first able to talk with James Danky and a number of other librarians who were interested in the collection and preservation of alternative, underground literature. Although my paper at the conference mused on the many ways in which SHARP’s focus on the complex social *practices* of reading helped to illuminate the particular role gender has played in facilitating people’s particular connections to and uses of books, at the time, I was beginning a project on girls and the creation and reading of zines during the 1990s. Those connections with librarians fostered at SHARP expanded my focus significantly so that the project now treats not only the production and reading of zines by girls,

but also on those zines' afterlives, that is, their archiving in libraries and recirculation many years later in popular media, in classrooms at all levels, and in scholarly research. I feel keenly that my work has been immeasurably enriched by SHARP's expansive intellectual focus and by the wonderful community it has fostered as a result. I am grateful, then, not only to Wayne Wiegand and James Danky, to zine librarians Jenna Freedman, Kelly Wooten, Alycia Sellie and many others, but to all who make up the vibrant SHARP community.

*Janice Radway is the Walter Dill Scott Professor of Communication and Professor of American Studies and Gender and Sexuality Studies at Northwestern University.*

## Kirsti Salmi-Niklander (2000)



My first SHARP Conference in Mainz 2000 was for me “a leap in the dark”: I had heard about SHARP by some Internet links and personal recommendations, and thought that SHARP could be a place where I could share my ideas on the topic of my doctoral thesis in Folklore Studies, hand-written newspapers. It turned out that I was right. In Mainz, I was very impressed by the open and multidisciplinary atmosphere. One of the absolute highlights was a joined lunch, on which a gentleman next to me introduced himself: “Hello, I am Robert Darnton”.

I have attended altogether 11 SHARP Conferences, including the annual conference in Helsinki 2010, in which I was one of the main organizers. This was a great challenge for the small community of Finnish book historians, and it provided a great possibility to promote the research on “Book culture from below” which had started in Finland and other Nordic countries during the first decade of the 21st century.

Other highlights of the past SHARP conferences are sessions on immigrant culture in Philadelphia 2013, and on hand-written newspapers in Antwerp 2014. SHARP has given me an international network of colleagues and friends, whom I have met over and over again in various places through the years. I have also experienced the challenging task as a member of the international jury of the DeLong Book Prize.

When I started my doctoral thesis in the 1990s, folklore studies, ethnology and book history seemed distant fields of research. Now the situation is quite different, and I can observe that my long-term missions of promoting co-operation and dialogue between these fields have been fruitful. In the field of book history, we have met with hard setbacks in Finland: the programme of book history at Faculty of Theology in the University of Helsinki, launched in 2011, was terminated in 2016 because of severe budget cuts in the financing of the University. This was a great and very unfortunate loss, but we need to go on with our multidisciplinary activities in Finnish Society for Book History, which I have chaired since 2014. During the time of setbacks and austerity measures SHARP has a vital role in providing a platform for multidisciplinary activities and networks.



*Kirsti Salmi-Niklander is University Lecturer in Folklore Studies at University of Helsinki; she was one of the main organizers of the SHARP Conference in Helsinki 2010 and served in the DeLong Book Prize Jury*

## Amadio Arboleda (2001)



I am SHARP ambassador for 2001 to recollect my memories of the organization's ninth year. As a book historian living and working in Japan on Japanese book history I am one manifestation of SHARP's cultural diversity.

I came to know SHARP in 1999 through an American publisher friend who had heard about a new organization focusing on book history. I had been involved in studying Japanese book history and book publishing in general as a sideline to my work as an editor and publisher, but I had never come across an organization focused mainly on book history. I was intrigued and set about finding out more. SHARP had a web site with basic information about what they did so I looked at it, liked what I read and decided to join.

This I did in July 2001 during a SHARP conference at William and Mary College in Williamsburg, Virginia in the US. The theme of the conference, which had more than 250 participants, was "Books and Libraries in the New Millennium." Sessions were held at the college, located next to the well-known Colonial Williamsburg, and at the state-of-the-art Library of Virginia. Among the featured speakers was David Baldacci, the best-selling author of *Absolute Power*. My own contribution was a presentation summarizing book publishing in Japan during the 265-years-long Edo period. There were many other interesting presentations and I got to meet and exchange ideas for the first time with fellow book historians who were not Japanese or Asian.

After this, I joined conferences and made presentations in London in 2002, Oxford in 2008 and Toronto in 2009. The photo below was taken at the Toronto conference during my presentation. (Ian, see attached)

My main aim in joining SHARP was to help make East Asian book history, particularly work being done in Japan, more widely known. I convinced The Japan Society for Publishing Studies, established in 1969, to accept a SHARP listing on their web site in exchange for listing on the SHARP web site. I also got the Printing Museum, Tokyo and the Rare Images Database of the National Diet Library of Japan listed on SHARP's web site. For me personally, I served as the SHARP Regional Liaison for Japan for several years and was also, first, member and, then, chair of the De Long Book History Prize jury.

*Amadio Arboleda is an American scholar of Japanese book culture residing in Tokyo since 1969.*

## Francis Galloway (2002)



In August 2001 I participated in a conference on colonial and postcolonial cultures of the book, organised by John Gouws at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. The keynote address was delivered by Robert Darnton. I discovered the field of book history, learned about the existence of SHARP and met members of the society – including Ian Willison, Claire Squires, Lydia Wevers, Paul Eggert, Peter D. McDonald and Andrew van der Vlies. This event was a turning point in my research career.

In 2002 I attended my first SHARP conference in London where I met Sydney Shep, Beth Luey, Bertrum MacDonald, Caroline Davis and others with shared research interests. In spite of the trials and tribulations of long distance travelling the annual SHARP conference became the highlight in my diary from 2002 to 2011 (Washington). I attended thought-provoking sessions which either demonstrated the archival richness, the interdisciplinary nature and expanding transnational reach of the field or which contributed ingenious theoretical and methodological premises. Of particular interest was the contribution of scholars focussing on contemporary publishing research, including Miha Kovač and Frank de Glas. It was an honour to be part of the pilot transnational research project (with Simon Eliot and Swapan Chakravorty) on the trade in educational texts in and between the UK, Bengal and South Africa – we reported on it at the Toronto conference (2009). I have fond memories of social events and discovering the landscapes, sights and cuisine of the exquisite host cities with a community of book scholars – many of whom became dear colleagues to share and test my own research with.

Through the years my involvement with SHARP expanded beyond delivering a paper (sometimes with my colleague Rudi Venter). I served on the Board of Directors (2006–2011); was the country liaison for (South) Africa (2009–2011); was an advisory editor of the journal *Book History*; and served on the jury of the George A. and Jean S. DeLong Book History Book Prize (2011, 2012, 2013).

In April 2007 a SHARP focused conference took place in Cape Town. From 2004 an informal “South African Book History Group” (including Isabel Hofmeyr and Archie Dick) placed the field of book history on the local research agenda through symposia / workshops / conferences, dedicated editions of scholarly journals, collections of essays, and monographs. The emphasis on the materiality of book production and circulation and the institutional embeddedness thereof rejuvenated the study of book cultures in South Africa. The research journey continues – thanks to the impetus provided by SHARP.

*Francis Galloway is an independent researcher and editor of an online academic journal.*

## Ann Steiner (2003)

My first SHARP in Lyon 2003 was an overwhelming and amazing experience leaving two distinct memories. The first is the sensation and realization of not being alone. As a graduate

student in literary studies with a focus on book history in Sweden – where this kind of research is scarce – I had questioned my choice of research field. At SHARP, on the other hand, there were all these likeminded people that had done fantastic things to learn from. Not only was there research to discover but also an impression of acceptance.

However, the memory is also one of realising what it means coming from a small culture and minor language in the periphery of Europe and trying to fit into an English-language and mainly British-American research context. Much of my own references were unheard of and many things were taken for granted. Some of it has to do with being a PhD-student and new to the conference scene, but some of it is part of global research structures where the dominance of English and of major countries impact most international conferences.

Both these experiences have followed through all the SHARP conferences I have been to since. On the one hand, SHARP offers opportunities, meetings and inclusiveness. On the other hand, the conferences have made me aware of centre and periphery in research. At the SHARP 2010 in Helsinki I was part of a plenary panel on “How aspects ‘from Below’ Changes Book History”. The “below” I interpreted at the time as working with material after 1900. Evidently, most papers at our conferences covers earlier material with a risk of limiting not only research areas but also theories and methods. More importantly, we should stress an inclusiveness of SHARP where people belong to different disciplines, come from different countries and linguistic background, but also work with material from all sorts of periods and times.

Most of all SHARP has been about meeting fantastic friends and colleagues over the years. A long walk in a warm summer night in London with Bertrum McDonald and Simone Murray, a wonderful panel in den Haag with Claire Squires, DeNel Rehberg Sedo and Danielle Fuller, the best social gathering ever in Antwerp with a ‘chip van’ in an art museum. These are glimpses of social, intellectual and stimulating moments and talks over these years.

*Ann Steiner is Associate Professor in Literary Studies and Publishing Studies at Lund University, Sweden.*

## Archie Dick (2004)



I attended my first SHARP Conference in Lyon, France in July 2004. South Africa was celebrating ten years of democracy, and curiously the title of my paper was: ‘To make the people of South Africa proud of their membership of the Great British Empire’. It was however about Home Reading Unions for the period 1900 to 1914, and constructive comments on the paper from the inimitable Jonathan Rose assured my welcome to SHARP, and the history of reading. To experience so many book history scholars presenting their latest offerings in one place over the period of a few days was both bewildering and exciting.

With some of my colleagues in attendance this event galvanized the little ‘South African Book History Group’, consisting then of Isabel Hofmeyr, Francis Galloway, Lize Kriel and myself, into action. A funded research project attracted younger scholars who would subsequently

become SHARP members themselves, and participants at its conferences. My doctoral student, Beth Le Roux, later became a member of the editorial board of *Book History*.

The South African Book History Group's activities began to attract international interest, and contributed to Cape Town hosting a SHARP regional conference in April 2007. A special highlight of that conference was the spirited discussion about whether South African book history scholars should initiate and imitate the national book history projects underway, or already completed in several countries.

By this time, the SHARP conferences I attended had connected me to scholars whose work I admired, and brought to my attention other forums where I could present my work. One such event was a conference at the University of London in 2008 where again I presented a paper engaging aspects of SHARP member Jonathan Rose's work. To my astonishment he was in the audience, making this a memorable occasion. Clearly, SHARP has a presence beyond its conferences!

The SHARP conference in Helsinki in 2010 connects with another special experience. I had submitted a book manuscript to the University of Toronto Press, and had no idea that the SHARP President at that time, Leslie Howsam, was also the General Editor for its Studies in Book and Print Culture series. Leslie sought me out to say hello at that conference and, along with Sydney Shep, guided me through the perils of writing a book about book history. *The Hidden History of South Africa's Book and Reading Cultures* is in many ways the outcome of the SHARP conferences I attended.

*Archie Dick is Head of the Department of Information Science, and Chairperson of the School of Information Technology at the University of Pretoria, South Africa.*

## Fiona Black (2005)



I owe many of my keenest academic pleasures to SHARP. My first experience with the Society was the wonderful SHARP-L, which I joined in 1993 having fallen in love with book history during a course taught by Bertrum MacDonald. I was immediately struck by the welcoming tone and respectful oversight provided by Patrick as the founding and long-serving listowner. My first experience of a SHARP conference was in Edinburgh in 1995, where I presented “Books by Express Canoe” about book availability in Canada’s northwest in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. That same year I began research for doctoral study with John Feather at Loughborough by examining evidence of book shipments from the UK to Canadian towns in the Georgian period. One evening, my husband Malcolm was using GIS to analyse wind erosion of soil, whilst I was puzzling over the movement of books in ships over oceans. Of course, GIS can be used for the geographic movement of any item and this realization led to “GIS for Book History” co-authored with Malcolm and Bertrum (*Book History, Volume 1*). I remain indebted to Jonathan and Ezra, founding editors of that award-winning journal, in which it was such a privilege to be published. The conference presentation that underpinned that paper

was at SHARP 1997 in Cambridge, and it remains my favourite SHARP memory. Preparing for my paper, and employing the great collegiality of SHARP-L, I reached out in January 1997 explaining that I was in the early stages of exploring the use of GIS for book history and seeking input. Several SHARPists expressed interest, though none had experience. My view as I spoke in Cambridge was of a room full of typically intellectually generous SHARPists, and the sun streaming in from the grassy quad. James Raven was chair of the session and, due to his scholarly generosity concerning my potentially wacky ideas, I learned the power of open-mindedness. I have tried to share such open-minded approaches in all I do. These comments describe the many blessings I owe to the superb community that is SHARP.

*Fiona Black is a Scottish-Canadian wife, Mum, Nana, Dalhousie Professor & inspired by colleagues in SHARP.*

## Kevin Absillis (2006)



Following Marx – Groucho, not Karl – I usually refuse to join any club that will accept me as a member. However, I was forced to make an exception for the Society for the History of Authorship Reading and Publishing in the sunny summer of 2006, when my proposal to present at its major annual conference, held that year in The Hague and Leiden, was accepted. The fact is that in order to be allowed to speak at SHARP conferences one has to become a member of the club – in itself common practice in academia. I have been a SHARP-member ever since and not once in over a decade have I regretted my decision. In The Hague and Leiden I met a most hospitable and generous academic community blessed with a genuine curiosity and a remarkably supportive attitude towards young researchers. Before I knew it I was invited to join SHARP's board of directors. And in 2012, much to my own surprise, I was trusted with the organization of SHARP's annual conference in 2014. (Had I known this back in 2006, things would have gone differently. I would most definitely have refused to join a club that accepts me to organize its principal event!) Luckily, we had a great team in Antwerp. It turned the 2014 conference into a wonderful and enriching experience. And the sun again didn't fail us that year. Nor has it any year prior or any year since. It is my utmost conviction that SHARP's overall benignity accounts for the fact that all of its gatherings – even the ones held in places otherwise uninterruptedly plagued by mist, rain or snow – have been endowed by extraordinarily sunny weather. So here's my advice: better join SHARP! If not for all the right reasons, do it for the most delightful picnics.

*Kevin Absillis (°1980) is lecturer in literary studies and modern Dutch language literature at the University of Antwerp.*

## Siobhan McMenemy (2007)

My average work day, as an acquiring editor at a scholarly publishing house, is shaped by conventions and routines that define our mandate as publishers, influence our editorial thinking, guide our authors' research and writing, and conform to, and confirm, our authors' and our audiences' expectations of what it means to be published by a university press. One might say

they are ensconced in the broad complex of professional relationships that exists between academe and scholarly publishing, though I think the level of comfort we have with the conventions and routines varies and is worthy of our further attention. It has been at SHARP conferences and in the issues of *Book History* and in the pages of scholarly books published in the field where I have enriched my understanding of the broader context of the professional world where I work. This scholarship—not only the research itself, but also the means of its expression and the methods of its dissemination—has encouraged me, in its attention to the past and its increasing willingness to push into the future (and to push against some of our publishing conventions), to consider the ways that I, as a professional in the publishing industry, might engage more creatively with those editorial practices and those generic forms that have defined the parameters of scholarly publishing.

My exceptional work day now includes research and editorial projects that actively support the shifting concerns of scholars, authors, and readers. I am working to provide new platforms for scholarly communication and to reimagine, then establish anew, sets of editorial and publishing practices that honour our present, collective scholarly interests and that recognise and engage with new forms of research and publishing. Collaboration, collective engagement, and mutual support: these are increasingly valuable acts in an industry like scholarly publishing, where we can ill afford to continue to measure our success in competition with one another. As we rise to the occasion, adapting and adopting new editorial, production, and distribution practices, even as we understand that, at present, much of what we are undertaking amounts to experimentation, the predictable challenge—historical *and* present—for all of us is to embrace these experiments together and to do so in ways that sustain our collective future as participants in the world of scholarly research and dissemination.

*Siobhan McMenemy, Senior Editor, WLU Press, has worked as an acquiring editor (of social sciences and humanities book manuscripts) in scholarly publishing for nearly twenty years and has taught courses and led seminars at various universities on topics related to scholarly publishing.*

## Melanie Ramdarshan Bold (2008)



I have been part of the SHARP community for about a decade now, and my engagement with the society has really helped to shape my career and who I am as an academic. I first attended the SHARP conference, as a PhD student, in 2008 (in Oxford). It was the first time I had presented my research at an international conference and I was incredibly nervous. It turned out that I had no need to be: SHARP was, and continues to be, the warmest and most inclusive conference/community. Even the heated discussion that arose during my copyright-themed panel, in Oxford, was convivial. I have attended the conference almost every year since, and continue to delight in the wide range of topics being presented and the beautiful bookish venues (highlights include receptions at the Bodleian Library and the Museum Plantin-Moretus). There has been an increased interest in contemporary book history research (my area of study) within SHARP over the years. The number of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century book history-related papers/panels at the conference and discussions on SHARP-L has risen; this has helped me to develop my research and find project collaborators.

The SHARP annual conference is especially friendly to Early Career Researchers, and I have been to a number of workshops and social events catered towards junior scholars. Large conferences can be overwhelming so these types of events really help to connect people who are at similar stages in their careers. Additionally, the more experienced SHARPists have always been very welcoming and generous with their time. As I head towards the end of my time as an Early Career Researcher, I hope that I can show the same kind of support and guidance to my younger colleagues.

The SHARP community is incredibly diverse and it has been a pleasure meeting new people and learning about their research/projects. I recently became the Exhibition Reviews Editor for SHARP news, which has introduced me to a whole new host of SHARP scholars and interesting events. SHARP is an important part of my academic life: not only have I expanded my research network through SHARP, finding excellent research collaborators, but I have also made some very good friends, from around the world, who I look forward to seeing at least once a year at the annual conference.

*Melanie Ramdarshan Bold is a Lecturer in the Department of Information Studies at University College London, where she teaches and researches topics related to Publishing and Book Cultures.*

## Benito Rial Costas (2009)



Soy miembro de SHARP desde 2009 y SHARP Liaison Officer para la Península Ibérica desde 2011.

Mi pertenencia a SHARP, sociedad pionera en la Historia del Libro, ha sido para mí enormemente enriquecedora tanto a nivel académico como humano. SHARP se me ha mostrado desde un principio una sociedad realmente abierta, multidisciplinar y global. SHARP me ha permitido entrar en contacto con una rica vida académica internacional y participar siempre y desde un principio de manera activa en sus diferentes proyectos.

SHARP-L ha sido una plataforma perfecta a través de la cual estar al día en los proyectos, becas, oportunidades de trabajo y grupos de investigación en la disciplina de Historia del Libro a nivel internacional, entrar en contacto con otros investigadores, conocer diferentes intereses, participar en discusiones académicas, obtener respuesta a mis preguntas y crear nuevas colaboraciones de investigación. Las conferencias anuales de SHARP a las que he podido asistir, no solo me han permitido participar y conocer de primera mano distintos grupos de investigación y proyectos, sino también dar a conocer los míos en un foro internacional y afianzar los lazos de amistad y colaboración con algunos colegas de la disciplina. *SHARP News* ha acogido con enorme generosidad mis reseñas y comentarios contribuyendo de manera importante al desarrollo de mi carrera académica. SHARP, como sociedad transparente, receptiva y global, ha siempre estado abierta a mis propuestas, y prestado oído y ayuda a mis proyectos y demandas. Gracias a SHARP he podido desarrollar proyectos y organizar conferencias y seminarios que sin su ayuda hubiesen resultado imposibles.

En definitiva, SHARP no es para mí solo una sociedad pionera en la nueva disciplina de Historia del Libro, sino también un modelo de sociedad abierta, activa y amiga.

*Benito Rial Costas es Profesor Asociado en la Facultad de Ciencias de la Documentación de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid (España).*

## Loretta De Franceschi (2010)



Faccio parte di SHARP ormai dal 2007 e dopo questi dieci anni il bilancio è assolutamente positivo. Nel campo della storia della produzione, circolazione, ricezione del libro, SHARP è così estesa geograficamente e così aperta a tutti gli interessati a tale ambito da costituire un'organizzazione leader. Questi due aspetti sono divenuti i maggiori punti di forza di SHARP. Grazie alla sua ramificazione in tantissimi paesi del mondo appartenenti a tutti i continenti, e al fatto di non essere un'associazione né accademica né professionale, SHARP rappresenta un'occasione d'incontro e di scambio con una vastissima

comunità scientifica.

I suoi membri possono innanzi tutto contare sul grande congresso annuale che puntualmente si svolge in città sempre diverse. Le centinaia di relazioni che si concentrano su un tema specifico, se da un lato creano talvolta delle difficoltà di partecipazione dovute alle numerose sessioni parallele, dall'altro però consentono un approfondito confronto tra studiosi e specialisti in materia. Altro fattore apprezzabile è che sono sempre previste visite alla scoperta del patrimonio culturale della sede ospitante.

Il mio primo coinvolgimento diretto con SHARP è avvenuto quando mi è stata offerta la possibilità di presiedere una sessione al convegno locale su *Il libro veneziano* (Venezia 2007). Poi ho tenuto relazioni ai seguenti congressi: Copenaghen 2008, Helsinki 2010, Washington D.C. 2011, Philadelphia 2013, Antwerp 2014, Paris 2016.

Dal 2012 sono anche referente per i rapporti con l'Italia, e SHARP ha accettato di dare il suo supporto ai seguenti tre seminari italiani: *I beni librari e archeologici nella prima guerra mondiale* (organizzato da me, Urbino 2015), *Luther in Italy* (Roma 2017), *The Author: Wanted, Dead or Alive* (Fiesole 2017).

L'adesione a SHARP è per me molto importante perché il settore di studi inerente alla storia del libro, dell'editoria, della lettura è poco sviluppato in Italia e sta inoltre subendo una progressiva contrazione. SHARP mi offre quindi l'opportunità di essere inserita in un'ampia comunità internazionale con interessi comuni. E' inoltre significativo il costante attivismo dell'associazione che promuove sempre varie iniziative, come questa di festeggiare i 25 anni di fondazione attraverso la voce di alcuni suoi membri. Grazie SHARP!

*Loretta De Franceschi is a teacher of History of Publishing and Bibliography at the University of Urbino, Italy.*



## Dagmar Riedel (2011)



I learned about SHARP in the same way in which I learned about a field called “book history” – by chance. The call for papers for the 2011 SHARP conference in Washington, DC was the first SHARP conference call to find its way into my email inbox, as it was circulated on a listserv on the history of medieval medicine. Since my research considers the historical evidence preserved by the manuscripts and printed books in Arabic script through which I access my written sources, I suddenly realized that my research could be subsumed under “book history” and thus I submitted an abstract and joined the SHARP listserv. When my paper was accepted, I immediately signed up for every library tour offered in conjunction with the SHARP conference that I could possibly fit into my schedule. The library tours were an eye-opening experience, as I learned that a close-up encounter with special collections can be an integral part of an academic conference because it offers an additional way of learning about books. Another characteristic which I first encountered at the Washington conference is SHARP’s commitment to studying books with a view towards the “longue durée” of written human communication. Since the materiality of the medium, whether handwritten, printed or digital, stands at the beginning of the examination of its written contents, SHARP is not only striving to include research on manuscript books and ephemera into its conferences, its members actively engage with electronic and digital media in all their forms. SHARP’s openness to social media created a beautiful moment during Ian Gadd’s keynote lecture on the early modern book trade in the Folger Theater. While Ian talked about the archival records of the Stationers’ Company in London, the view from the balcony into the pit showed a dark room filled with mysteriously gleaming digital screens, since many in the audience were tweeting about his keynote. In accordance with its historical ambitions, SHARP aspires to being a global scholarly network. The map of regional liaisons on the SHARP homepage shows that we SHARP members have our work cut out for us, as for the time being SHARP is poorly represented in Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia. For me this challenge presents a great opportunity for SHARP’s next twenty-five years, and I am looking forward to SHARP’s future.

*Dagmar Riedel (Columbia University) is a Middle East historian whose research focuses on the transmission of knowledge across Eurasia.*

## Helen Sonner (2012)

In August 2010 my PhD research had reached an impasse. Eager to make a contribution to our understanding of early modern print culture, I found myself unexpectedly flummoxed by information technology of a more recent stamp. I was attempting to quantify results I was finding in Early English Books Online – but I couldn’t seem to find definitive information about the parameters of the database itself. Was there a solid intellectual foundation for my attempts to quantify what I was finding in EEBO – or was I wasting precious time trying to create statistics out of what was a fundamentally random set of data that might not align with the lived experience of early modern authors, readers, and, publishers?

I was growing desperate. With the clock ticking and an increasingly impatient dissertation supervisor, I needed to find answers to these methodological questions, or drop this line of

argument altogether. Finally, in the wee small hours of a morning, I found a 2009 article by Ian Gadd in *Literature Compass* (“The Use and Misuse of Early English Books Online”) that answered all my questions and highlighted other critical issues that hadn’t yet occurred to me. I was almost drunk with gratitude and relief, and, in my enthusiasm, sent Ian – a stranger to me at that point – an email of thanks.

I received a lovely reply back the next day, which included Ian’s recommendation that I consider joining SHARP. Out of curiosity, I tapped into the annual conference being streamed a few days later from Finland, and created what I fully expected to be a short-lived Twitter account to follow the conference tweets. By conference end, however, I found the pattern had repeated: in their presentations, questions, and tweets, SHARP members had helped me to resolve various technical and intellectual questions that had arisen in my own research, deepened my appreciation for the nature of book history more generally, and expanded my appreciation of contemporary communication technology (live tweeting from an academic conference was a novelty in 2010). Moreover, the digital stream from Helsinki demonstrated that Ian’s collegiality was representative of the society more generally, as I’ve since experienced in person at the annual conferences in Dublin, Philadelphia, and Antwerp. In addition to intellectual rigor and technological prowess, SHARP offers old-fashioned scholarly camaraderie and collegiality. I remain as grateful today as I was in 2010.

*Helen Sonner earned her PhD in 2013 from Queen’s University Belfast and is working as an independent scholar and medical writer in Washington, DC.*

## SeoKyung Han (2013)

In 2013, when I first participated in the 21<sup>st</sup> annual SHARP conference (Philadelphia, the USA), I could learn how to revise one of my dissertation chapters. The chapter described, initially, how women were represented in the (Neo-)Confucian books of the Chosŏn Korea (1392-1910). Yet various projects of the conference reminded me of the significance that, from antiquity through premodern East Asia, women were continuously inscribed on walls and material objects, including ritual-wares and art crafts, yet the books motivated and mobilized depicting and disseminating women’s roles and ideal womanhood uniquely. The methods and methodologies of the projects encouraged me to revisit why and how the narratives of filial daughters-in-law and daughters, along with those of loyal or chaste wives, were flourished across eras and regions. I additionally came to explore deeper how the books were instrumental in transmitting the East Asian values of filial piety, loyalty, and chastity and transforming the ideas and ideals of those virtues in the individual locales. Thus, in my revision, I elaborated how the Chosŏn court selected and arranged the female biographies for the (Neo-)Confucian didactic books and, until the demise of the dynasty, published and circulated those books to edify people. I emphasized not only how the representations of women were produced and reproduced in the Chosŏn, but also how those narratives were accepted and applied as factor in changing the way of people’s living and (Neo-)Confucianizing the culture and society of the Chosŏn. The revision, evidently, enhanced my dissertation. Back then, in my home institution, I could not find courses or seminars or workshops that taught how to study the materiality, publication, and circulation of the books (or texts) and the related histories and cultures. Instead, in the SHARP conference, I found opportunities to meet scholars from the similar research areas and discuss the relevant

subjects. In addition, I could learn how the conference, not to mention the SHARP, was well organized and open to diversity. My experience convinces me that the SHARP would epitomize how the inter/trans-disciplinary and multicultural approaches should enrich the Humanities and the academia as well. It has been an honor for me to be part of the SHARP. I would like to offer sincere congratulations on the SHARP 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and send my best wishes for the continued success and strength.

*SeoKyung Han, PhD explores the book history and culture of antiquity through premodern East Asia and, currently, focuses on the transmission, translation, and reproduction of the Buddhist sutras and apocrypha in the premodern Korea.*

## Marina Garone Gravier (2014)



Tuve mis primeras noticias de la existencia de SHARP cuando inicié mi tesis doctoral, en 2005. Al tener que hacer el rastreo de algunas fuentes de consulta y bibliografía supe de varios eventos organizados por la asociación, también me enteré de la revista *Book history* y comencé a encontrar los nombres de algunos autores que luego sabría que han sido o son miembros de la institución, e inclusive que han tenido algún papel en el *board*. Entonces no conocía a nadie en México que fuera socio ni hubiera participado en las actividades de la asociación.

Bastante tiempo más tarde recibí de un colega argentino la noticia de que se llevaría cabo el primer encuentro regional de SHARP en América Latina, específicamente en Río de Janeiro, Brasil, y se me ocurrió convocar a varios colegas para armar una mesa sobre Historia del libro en México; tuvimos la suerte de ser aceptados y pudimos participar. El programa de Río resultó ser tan interesante como variado y ahí pude conocer a muchos otros profesionales de los estudios del libro y la edición de Argentina, Colombia, Brasil, Uruguay, Perú.

Poco tiempo después de ese evento recibí un mail de Ian y Simon preguntando de qué manera consideraba yo que SHARP podía contribuir a fortalecer los estudios y actividades en torno al libro en Latinoamérica. Respondí entonces una larga carta con algunas ideas y propuestas concretas, algunas de las ideas eran de carácter práctico y financiero, similares a las que hemos aplicado con éxito en la Association Typographique Internationale, ATypI, para una mejor y mayor participación de miembros de América Latina, otras propuestas son de más difícil implementación: tiene que ver con crear mecanismos que permitan una real apertura, receptividad y valoración a las producciones intelectuales en lengua castellana por parte de la academia anglosajona. Creo que en ese aspecto y desde que soy socia, SHARP ha hecho importantes avances, también creo que aún hay mucho camino por recorrer, sobre todo para una organización que desea ser plural e internacional.

El encuentro que organizamos en Monterrey en 2015, el segundo auspiciado por SHARP a nivel regional, refrendó claramente que al menos una parte de los académicos que trabajamos estos temas tenemos la intención de fortalecer la presencia y conocimiento que hoy se tiene a nivel internacional, de los estudios del libro y la edición en América Latina.

La lista de correo de la asociación para mi ha sido una clase de “cordón umbilical” que me conecta con el “planeta SHARP”, esa lista me ha permitido conocer a colegas —al menos de manera virtual—, estar al tanto de muchas noticias, de eventos sumamente interesantes a los que usualmente no he podido asistir, pero al menos con ella puedo saber qué se está discutiendo o proponiendo en otros ambientes académicos. Y también me ha permitido difundir algunos de los proyectos, libros e iniciativas que hemos realizado en México, Argentina y Colombia.

Construir instituciones es una tarea compleja, difícil y que requiere mucha paciencia, por eso me alegra que estemos celebrando los primeros 25 años de SHARP, y sigamos haciendo de él un espacio de aprendizaje, intercambio, apoyo y camaradería.

*Marina Garone Gravier (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) has a PhD in Art History and specializes in book and typography from Latin America.*

## Henning Hansen (2015)



I first heard about SHARP from my teachers at Lund University, back in 2010. They had just been to the SHARP conference in Helsinki, and were head over heels with excitement. Regrettably, I was too busy studying Swedish reading habits to pay sufficient attention. A few years later, when I had crossed the Atlantic for a visiting fellowship in Boston, I attended a lecture by Robert Darnton. Afterwards, I summoned the courage to talk to him, and he inquired about the state of Scandinavian book history. Just before we parted, he looked at me and asked: ‘Are you a member of SHARP? Make sure you are a member of SHARP.’

I finally took the plunge, and in 2015 I attended my first SHARP conference. As a doctoral student, participating in conferences is among the most rewarding things you can do in my opinion. I have had the opportunity to attend an array of conferences, and they have all been enjoyable and interesting, each in their own way. None of them, however, can match my experiences of the annual SHARP conferences. Coming to Longueuil/Montreal was such a pleasant experience. I particularly appreciated the initiatives taken to include junior participants like myself. The concept of lightning papers was clever, and at the young scholars’ dinner I met like-minded people from across the globe, some of whom I am today proud to call my friends. When giving my presentation, I found it reassuring to see several familiar faces in the audience.

Despite the fact that SHARP has over one thousand members, from differing backgrounds, the entire organisation is permeated by a friendly and familiar atmosphere. When I attended my second annual SHARP conference, in Paris last year, one of the best things was catching up with “old” friends and making new acquaintances. The subject of book history is an interdisciplinary field, and most book historians are scattered across a wide range of departments and institutions. For me, and I believe for many other book historians as well, coming to a SHARP conference is a little bit like coming home. To be able to exchange thoughts and ideas with people who share my passion for books has been a truly enriching experience. The importance of SHARP when it comes to creating a community for the field of book history and to support our identity as book historians cannot be overestimated.

I can't wait to come to Victoria for this year's annual conference and to be among fellow SHARPists again!

*Henning Hansen is a PhD candidate at UiT The Arctic University of Norway.*

## LE Hong Phuoc (2016)



L'été 2016 me sera inoubliable. Inoubliable parce que j'ai eu, en ce moment-là, un joli séjour à la ville Lumière pour tout d'abord parler sur le sol français la langue de Molière, et pour un séjour d'ordre académique : participer au Congrès SHARP PARIS 2016 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France-BNF, BULAC- Bibliothèque universitaire des Langues et Civilisations).

En fait, ce n'est pas la première fois, en juillet 2016, que je suis venu en France. J'ai préparé ma thèse en histoire culturelle franco-vietnamienne sous la direction du Professeur Jean-Yves MOLLIER à l'Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-En-Yvelines-UVSQ (l'École Doctorale CRIT, le Centre d'Histoire Culturelle des Sociétés Contemporaines-CHCS) de 2009 à 2015. Durant 5 ans de séjour à Paris, j'ai travaillé comme journaliste à RFI. J'ai été aussi artiste du théâtre traditionnel du Vietnam, et fait beaucoup de spectacles dans toute la France. Ainsi, Paris et la France m'ont laissé tant de beaux souvenirs.

Ma thèse a été soutenue en septembre 2014 à l'UVSQ avec mention TRÈS HONORABLE. Je suis revenu au Vietnam en janvier 2015 pour continuer mon travail d'enseignant-chercheur, que j'étais lors de mon départ en France, à l'Université des Sciences Sociales et Humaines-membre de l'Université Nationale du Vietnam à Hochiminh-Ville. Alors, j'ai commencé à me plonger dans le travail avec un nouveau poste : vice-directeur de la Faculté de Lettres Françaises de ladite université.

Pris par le travail, je pensais toujours à Paris et souhaitais y aller à première occasion. Peut-être que je suis né sous une belle étoile : SHARP PARIS 2016 m'a invité avec une bourse de DELMAS. Alors, j'ai eu l'occasion de revisiter Paris et de participer à un Congrès mondialement connu sur les livres et les éditions.

Le Congrès SHARP PARIS 2016 a été une fierté pour moi parce que j'étais l'un des six boursiers de DELMAS. Fierté parce que j'ai eu l'occasion d'être présent à un congrès attirant quelque 500 historiens venus de partout dans le monde. Fierté parce que j'ai fait 2 interventions en français sur les relations France-Vietnam et sur l'histoire des éditions au Vietnam. Fierté parce que j'ai pu contacter de multiples visions de la part des historiens mondiaux pour élargir et approfondir mes connaissances. C'est très bon pour un enseignant-chercheur, non ?

SHARP PARIS 2016 sera inoubliable pour moi parce qu'à côté de sa portée académique, il a été un séjour pleinement culturel. Les historiens mondiaux ont eu une belle occasion de (re)découvrir la ville Lumière. Pour moi, j'ai pu revisiter les lieux que j'adorais durant mon séjour doctoral. Moi et les autres historiens avons été invités à dîner au 18<sup>e</sup> étage de la BNF-site

Francois Mitterrand pour admirer Paris et la Seine d'en haut de manière on ne peut plus idéale. Moi et les autres historiens ne pourrons pas certainement oublier le dîner de couleur historique à la Galerie Colbert située dans un quartier historique de Paris. On semblait à ce moment-là entrer dans un monde historique avec l'allocation du Professeur Jean-Yves MOLLIER-Président du Comité Scientifique de SHARP PARIS 2016, qui a rappelé beaucoup d'importantes histoires liées à ce lieu.

Et encore un beau souvenir: j'ai été invité avec les 5 autres historiens boursiers par DELMAS à dîner à un joli restaurant dans un joli quartier : Cour-Saint-Émilion, avec des plats français délicieux dans une ambiance bien française. C'est là une leçon culturelle, non ?

En tant que bénéficiaire d'une bourse DELMAS pour participer au Congrès SHARP PARIS 2016, je tiens à remercier tous ceux qui m'ont aidé à revenir à Paris dans le cadre du Congrès pour avoir de si beaux souvenirs. SHARP PARIS 2016 m'a beaucoup aidé dans l'élargissement de mes connaissances. Je pense que ce type de congrès continuera à être utile aux enseignants-chercheurs comme moi, et j'espère que SHARP continuera à aider les jeunes chercheurs comme moi à y participer.

Que le 25<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de SHARP ferme une étape déjà réussie pour commencer une autre plus réussie !

*M.LE Hong Phuoc, né en 1979 au Vietnam, Docteur en Histoire Culturelle Franco-Vietnamienne, ancien journaliste à RFI, présentement Vice-Directeur de la Faculté de Lettres Françaises à l'Université des Sciences Sociales et Humaines (Université Nationale du Vietnam à Hochiminh-Ville).*