***The cottage by the highway and other essays on publishing: 25 Years of Logo*s, edited by Angus Phillips**

Gordon Graham used his retirement as Chief Executive of Butterworths to launch a publication he had long had in mind; dating gestation back to the idea ‘nudging him on the shoulder’ in 1974. His intention was to capture thoughtful content *around* the publishing process; to expand and explore how decisions had been made. While the nature of publishing can be explained in a series of ‘how to’ functions, would-be publishers learn early just how many things need to be handled concurrently rather than consecutively. It follows that there is much to be learned from how others have managed; for the future benefit of industry participants of all flavours.

Those charged with explaining why ‘yet another journal’ is needed use a range of predictable phrases (‘a new forum for discussion needed’; ‘a specific repository to reflect this fast-expanding but so far largely disparate area’). Graham’s rationale was far more broad-ranging, reflecting his international interests and wider desire to promote understanding. ‘(I) have long felt that the book world is too compartmented, by both national and disciplinary boundaries’ and an editorial in the very first edition states his editorial intentions for the new publication:

‘It plans to focus on meanings, not news; on experiences interpreted as well as reported; on history more as illumination than reminiscence. It will give equal respect to passionate beliefs and detached analysis. It will encourage humour and anecdote. Its interest in personalities will be limited to the extent that their thoughts and activities dramatize the issues.’

He was proud when contemporaries compared his thoughtful approach to the editorial policy of *The Economist.*

This collection, brought together by his successor as editor, Angus Phillips, is a worthy reflection of the journal as a whole, throughout its history. Several contributions are formalised versions of speeches given on key occasions, captured now in finished format; others curated additions whereby he sought the reflections of the key figures in the book business. Thus we gain the succinct observations Ian Norrie, the best known bookseller of his day; Tim Rix on the education sector; Diana Athill on how to set up a publishing house and comparative papers from the UK and Sweden offering (early) demographic analysis of the market for romantic fiction. We also hear first-hand observations of experiences we must hope not to share, such as how it felt to watch a collection of books you had nurtured be destroyed:

‘Amid explosions, the magnificent old building, together with its volumes, was disappearing in smoke and flames. It was as if I witnessed a life come to an end.’ Tatjana Prastalo on destruction of the National Library of Bosnia and Herzgovina in Sarajevo.

Throughout the book one has a clear sense of Graham’s purpose in eyeing up the past to benefit the future; his tendency to philosophise and draw wisdom from how others have managed similar challenges – and of his international viewpoint. Having worked as International Sales Manager for McGraw Hill in New York and later run the company’s book business in Europe and the Middle East, his international perspective is continually present. Thus we gain an exploration of censorship within a market known to very few (Iran) but through principles familiar to many, and can read Eva Kniessel on establishing a market for translated fiction, in this case Chinese. So while it may be true that:

‘According to UNESCO, almost half of all translations are made from English into other languages while only 6% are into English…English is not only the overpowering language of translation, but the language of mass culture itself.’ Eva Hemmungs Wirten

the overall message is clear. While the UK and US may regard themselves as the axes of the international publishing industry, much can be learned from its operation elsewhere.

**Who are the publishers?**

Perhaps the most interesting facet of the collection is the light it sheds on the nature of the publisher – the individual who, to quote Jerome S Rubin from issue one, volume one:

‘…must, therefore, be always on the move – updating substance, improving process, and creating new possibilities for format.’

Obituaries of publishers do sometimes appear in the national press but other than lamenting the demise of yet another ’last gentleman publisher’ or highlighting their specific successes, their wider motivation largely remains unreported. Here, by contrast, is a rich source of material. We learn from Albert Henderson that Robert Maxwell ‘…relied on intuition, charm and an abundance of chutzpah’; was ‘capable of huge spurts of energy and rampant optimism’ – and would regularly throw ‘mail out the window of his speeding Rolls Royce, piece by piece as he read it.’ Deconstructing the success of Eva Neurath, Tom Rosenthal identifies : ‘Her prodigious charm was allied to an entirely original mind, well stocked with everything from Jungian analysis to the contents of the world museums’ – that and her habit of examining the handwriting of every potential employee.

Philip Jarvis and Sue Thomson document how Paul Hamlyn left school ‘unburdened by any great academic honours’, justified his love of luxury ‘an appropriate incentive to earn money in order to spend more’, while his ‘universally recognised asset was a near perfect sense of timing…something he cultivated by being secret about his future plans.’ Diana Athill, Andre Deutch’s long term collaborator, identifies his ‘rare and useful gift: in him there was hardly any gap between thinking and doing.’ This combined with an ’instinctive gift for getting credit out of a stone wall’; ‘his uncanny ability to persuade’ and ‘genuine inability to see any point of view but his own’.

Tim Waterstone confesses that intuition rather than market research lay behind his decision to spend the last of his redundancy pay-out from WH Smith on setting up his first bookshop – but later reflects that most successful entrepreneurs ‘are driven by an inability to forgive themselves’ and adds as evidence his own long-term struggle with the ‘contempt shown to me by my late father’.

**Publishing principles**:

One also consistently senses the journal’s role as gentle educator, and the collection offers a few good essay titles, such as Maarten Asscher’s:

‘This industrious, but far from industrial, industry’ (Discuss).

There are a number of summaries that are ripe for further development, such as Mark Aronson’s elegant 1999 of prediction for how the genre of young adult titles is likely to develop:

‘Whatever new forms YA takes. I think it will hearken back to its two initial forms: the direct expression of teenage experience and the invention of new worlds as wild, dangerous and profound as this one feels to the teenagers who are first learning to master it.’

Michael Kruger’s ‘To publish literary books one has to be utterly convinced that they tell something that cannot be told in any other way’ could however surely work as an prototype for any type of publishing, at any level. Similarly Betty Ballantine’s summary of her role in the US:

‘Spot the demand and import as many, or as few, copies of each title as it seemed to warrant.’

is capable of much wider general application. The book as whole is full of such little gems that reveal the wealth of experience being tapped.

Throughout, the value of innovation emerges. Robert Maxwell championing the sharing of scientific research and in the process how he ‘explored new publishing technologies – cold type composition, offset printing, computers and microforms – to increase the options available for dissemination.’ And in the first issue Rubin speculates that ‘While the “age of the book” may be coming to an end, the book itself will not die; it will increasingly become a creature of the new electronic technologies instead of the once new technologies of paper, ink and moveable type.’ I can feel this succinct summary edging its way into talks on publishing already.

I’ll end with a personal note. I think it was in 1991, at a mostly publishing garden party hosted by Richard Balkwill, that I first met Gordon Graham. He mentioned his new journal, and asked me to write something for him. When I commented on being busy writing books about the industry for Kogan Page, he talked about the importance of clarifying, summarising and laying down your thoughts *as part of the debate*; particularly significant should I one day decide to enter academia.

Today publishing is still a profession, but it’s also a process, and one of increasing societal relevance as more organisations and individuals see the value of knowing how to formalise and disseminate content. It’s entered the academy, and as a discipline Publishing Studies caters for an increased demand from students and those funding them for qualifications that improve employability. But learning how to do something benefits from both practical application and wider wisdom, and the material Graham sought to capture will be of immense use to future publishers – in seeking to deal with issues we don’t even yet anticipate.

The fact that this celebration of *Logos* is now in printed format, a tempter for the full range of material available on subscription, shows both Graham’s and his publication’s immense and continued influence. And it augurs well for the journal’s future. Long may it, as the current editor intends, continue to offer ’international and intercultural, bridging gaps between academia and business, the developed and the developing worlds, and books and digital media.’

Dr Alison Baverstock is Associate Professor of Publishing at Kingston University and the author of *How to market books* (5th edition, 2015, Routledge).