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Obituary of Andrew Brown

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Andrew Brown (1950-2014). Publisher Extraordinary.

I first met Andrew Brown on the conference circuit in the early 1980s. As the recently appointed senior editor for literature at Cambridge University Press he was a regular presence at Victorian Studies conferences, wearing his Press hat, but unlike many other publishers, attending as a productive scholar in his own right. He got in touch with me in 1989 asking if he could come to Leicester to talk about a project he was contemplating, a new edition of the *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, the nineteenth-century volume of which had been last updated under George Watson's editorship in 1969. I was intrigued by the prospect. I was equally surprised several days later to receive a phone message from his office to say that unfortunately Dr Brown had broken his arm in a cricket match at the weekend, and was unable to drive to Leicester. Would I mind coming to Cambridge instead?

I remember thinking, as he rose from his desk to greet me waving a large cast on his arm, that this was surely a very unusual publisher. I had no reason ever to change my mind in the years that followed. Andy, as he was known to friends and colleagues alike, had a gift for friendship, for scholarly conversation that was never stuffy, and for making one determined to do a good job. The *CBEL* (3) editorial meetings, as the new edition was referred to, were lengthy, often hilarious, and punctuated by breaks for Marks and Spencer sandwiches, purchased by Andy on the way to the Press, along with carefully selected wine. Bulwer Lytton, the subject of his PhD, was a constant point of reference, which, depending on whether you were a mediaevalist, a renaissance scholar or a Victorianist, was either incomprehensible, bemusing, or (sort of) helpful. When some years later I became an associate editor of the projected *ODNB* and found Bulwer Lytton in my block, I knew I had my contributor.

I saw less of Andy after 2002 when he became managing director of academic and professional publishing and his responsibilities at the Press grew. When I did bump into him, it was always refreshing to have his take on things, whether on scholarly editing, on a specific project, or on the future of academic publishing. His views were sharp, irreverent, and memorable. Cambridge University Press, or at least the humanities division, has a reputation for keeping its authors, and of regarding them as friends. Much of that is owing to Andy's way of doing things.

In the seemingly endless discussions about the structure of entries in the *Cambridge Bibliography*, one of the subjects to which Andy warmed was authorial names, their variants, spellings, pseudonyms etc. The *CBEL* Bulwer Lytton entry is prefaced by a lengthy paragraph on the topic, as is the *ODNB* entry. In the sad days following his untimely death in January of this year one of his close colleagues at CUP asked me if I had noticed the hyphen in Bulwer Lytton that had crept into the *Guardian* obituary, causing a flurry of emails between the Press and the paper's obituaries editor. 'We all noticed it immediately', she wrote, 'since we have spent half our professional lives removing the hyphen from various scripts on Andy's strict instructions. He would have relished the exchange.'

And indeed he would have done. Scholarly precision and learning worn lightly were two enduring qualities which he brought into his professional life. He was a publisher who made his mark on a generation of scholars by setting his own high standards of scholarship.

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