

Street Literature  
of the Long Nineteenth  
Century



# Street Literature of the Long Nineteenth Century:

*Producers, Sellers, Consumers*

Edited by

David Atkinson and Steve Roud

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# TERMINOLOGY, ABBREVIATIONS, RESOURCES

## Street Literature Terminology

*Broadside* – a single sheet of paper printed on one side, with text in verse or prose, frequently illustrated with a woodcut image. Examples exist of broadsides printed on both sides, sometimes referred to as broadsheets, but these are relatively rare.

*Chapbook* – a small book comprised of a single sheet of paper folded into a booklet, most commonly of between eight and twenty-four pages, and of correspondingly small dimensions, issued without stitching, binding, or added cover. Chapbooks were often sold by itinerant pedlars or chapmen, the name from which chapbook is, apparently, derived by a back-formation. *Note:* In the Welsh context, scholars tend to refer to ballad pamphlets of eight pages, and ballad sheets or leaflets of four pages.

*Garland* – used in titles to describe some early collections of songs, or long songs in several parts, in both broadside and chapbook format. Later, the term continued to appear in chapbook titles and is sometimes used more or less synonymously with chapbook.

*Slip song* – a single song printed on a narrow piece of paper, often formed by cutting a larger broadside into two or more strips.

*Songster* – an ambiguous word, used by scholars to designate a small, paper-covered book of songs, usually more substantial than a chapbook (but sometimes applied to much larger songbooks).

Broadside and chapbook titles are given in italics and punctuated and capitalized according to standard conventions, without any attempt to reproduce the (sometimes idiosyncratic) original typography. Imprint information is given in full for primary sources, but standardized as to capitalization, hyphenation, punctuation, etc.

Pre-decimal currency  
*1d.* (one penny)

1s. (one shilling) = 12d.

£1 (one pound) = 20s.

## Abbreviations

BBTI British Book Trade Index • <http://bbti.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>

ESTC English Short Title Catalogue • <http://estc.bl.uk/>

*ODNB Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

• <http://www.oxforddnb.com/>

*OED Oxford English Dictionary* • <http://www.oed.com/>

SBTI Scottish Book Trade Index

• <http://www.nls.uk/catalogues/scottish-book-trade-index>

VWML London, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library

• <http://www.vwml.org.uk/>

Dacey catalogues

*A Catalogue of Maps, Prints, Copy-Books, Drawing-Books, &c., Histories, Old Ballads, Broad-sheet and Other Patters, Garlands, &c. printed and sold by William and Cluer Dacey, at their Warehouse, opposite the south Door of Bow Church in Bow Church-yard, London* (printed in the year 1754) [ESTC T188172].

*A Catalogue of Maps, Prints, Copy-Books, Drawing-Books, Histories, Old Ballads, Patters, Collections, &c. printed and sold by Cluer Dacey and Richard Marshall, at the Printing Office, in Aldermary Church-yard, London* (printed in the year 1764) [ESTC T162594].

• <http://daceyandmarshall.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>

## Resources

Bodleian Library • <http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>

Madden Ballads, Cambridge University Library (microfilm at VWML)

Harvard Law School Library • <http://broadsides.law.harvard.edu/>

National Library of Scotland • <http://digital.nls.uk/broadsides/>

Welsh almanacs • <https://www.llgc.org.uk/?id=7379>

Welsh ballads • Cerddi Bangor, Bangor University Library (microfilm at Cardiff University Library and National Library of Wales)

• <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/special-collections/subject-guides/welsh-ballads/>

• <http://www.e-gymraeg.org/baledi/>

• <https://www.llgc.org.uk/discover/nlw-resources/ballads/>

Some of the items in collections including the British Museum, Museum of London, Royal Collection, and Tate Gallery can be accessed online via the collections' websites.

Online sources accessed and verified 1 March 2017.

## PREFACE

“Street literature” can be defined, or at least described, in relation to a number of different categories: format and typography, genre and literary history, printing and mode of sale, readership and audience, subject and theme – or, more broadly, production, distribution, and reception. Leslie Shepard’s book on the subject takes a content-based approach, covering broadside ballads, chapbooks, proclamations, news-sheets, election bills, tracts, pamphlets, cocks, catchpennies, and other ephemera, but also pays some attention to production and distribution.<sup>1</sup> Victor Neuburg takes rather more of a “history of mentalities” approach, with the aim of situating street literature within the social and intellectual lives of working men and women, and also children, and tracing the emergence of a much broader field of “popular literature” in the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Robert Collison sees street literature as the forerunner of the popular press and takes a journalistic, subject-based approach.<sup>3</sup> The premise of the present collection of essays is that all of the aforementioned categories are intertwined and that street literature from, roughly, the end of the eighteenth century up until the First World War has to be conceived as a multi-faceted history of production, distribution, and reception.

It is possible, too, to consider street literature as ephemera, but always as ephemera that fed back into the history of the times. Samuel Pepys collected broadside ballads as a record of customs and manners, and of the history of the ballad trade.<sup>4</sup> Samuel Johnson wrote:

There is, perhaps, no Nation, in which it is so necessary, as in our own, to assemble, from time to time, the small Tracts and fugitive Pieces, which

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<sup>1</sup> Leslie Shepard, *The History of Street Literature: The Story of Broadside Ballads, Chapbooks, Proclamations, News-Sheets, Election Bills, Tracts, Pamphlets, Cocks, Catchpennies, and Other Ephemera* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> Victor E. Neuburg, *Popular Literature: A History and Guide, from the Beginning of Printing to the Year 1897* (London: Woburn Press, 1977).

<sup>3</sup> Robert Collison, *The Story of Street Literature: Forerunner of the Popular Press* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1973).

<sup>4</sup> Richard Luckett, “The Collection: Origins and History”, in Helen Weinstein, *Catalogue of the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge*, vol. 2, *Ballads, Part 2, Indexes* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), pp. xi–xxi.

are occasionally published: For, besides the general Subjects of Enquiry, which are cultivated by us, in common with every other learned Nation, our Constitution in Church and State naturally gives Birth to a Multitude of Performances, which would either not have been written, or could not have been made publick in any other Place.”<sup>5</sup>

But the point has been rightly made that such ephemera were probably not considered ephemeral at the time of their production and reception, or to the collectors who sought to preserve them, and that their seemingly transitory nature is merely the consequence of the flimsiness and cheapness that enabled the wide circulation of such literature in the first place.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, it can be argued that the production of printed material is simply a commercial imperative and that no one cares what the purchaser does with it. It is certainly true that the ballad seller sought to sell ballads, and might have sung or declaimed them in order to attract customers, but might equally have retained no real interest in whether the purchasers subsequently read or sang the songs – though even then, the customer who did not make some intellectual or emotional investment would presumably be unlikely to come back for further purchases at a later date. Street literature – printed matter that was displayed and sold in the streets, marketplaces, and byways of Britain – took the form not only of “reading matter” but also of advertisements, handbills and notices, proclamations, play-bills, and other pieces of jobbing printing. All such things were read by the public. The contemporary writer Charles Manby Smith made the point that one of the reasons for higher levels of literacy in a city like Victorian London was that the reading skills of the working population were constantly being reinforced by the presence of notices and bills posted in the streets, “and it is a sheer impossibility for a lad who has once learned the art of reading, to lose it in London, unless he both wilfully blind and destitute of human curiosity”.<sup>7</sup> Even the record of jobbing printing and ephemera that has survived from the previous century – a tiny

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<sup>5</sup> “An Essay on the Origin and Importance of Small Tracts and Fugitive Pieces, Written for the Introduction to the Harleian Miscellany”, in *Miscellaneous and Fugitive Pieces*, 3 vols (London: printed for T. Davies, in Russel Street, Covent Garden, bookseller to the Royal Academy, [1773]–74), II, 1–9 (pp. 1–2) [ESTC T101912].

<sup>6</sup> Kevin D. Murphy and Sally O’Driscoll (eds), *Studies in Ephemera: Text and Image in Eighteenth-Century Print* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2013), pp. 3–5.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Manby Smith, *Curiosities of London Life; or, Phases, Physiological and Social, of the Great Metropolis* (London: W. and F. G. Cash, 1857 [1853]), p. 122.

fraction of the actual output, no doubt – points towards the progressive opening up of printing to ordinary people on a grand scale.<sup>8</sup>

So the distinction is not an absolute one. Jobbing printing was an essential part of the commercial environment in which street literature flourished, especially in the eighteenth century. On the whole, however, the focus of this collection of essays is primarily on street literature designed to inform, educate, and entertain, and aimed at the lower reaches of the market for print. In practice, this means primarily publications in broadside and chapbook formats, comprising verse and prose, fiction and non-fiction, that were sold by itinerant pedlars and from small retail premises, and could also be acquired directly from the printers. The distribution part of this equation is every bit as important as the format and content of the physical items, and serves to draw a (very imprecise and porous) line between street literature and the broader category of nineteenth-century popular literature, which there is simply not the space here to embrace in its entirety.

\*

Strictly speaking, a broadside (or broadsheet) is an unfolded sheet of paper with print on just one side (though there are examples printed on both sides, and it is perhaps not worth quibbling over the terms used to describe them). Some broadsides were printed with two or more songs side by side, with the intention that they could be separated into so-called “slip songs”. A chapbook is a small book created from a single sheet of paper folded into a booklet of, most commonly, between eight and twenty-four pages, occasionally more. The term “chapbook” itself is an early nineteenth-century coinage, apparently a back-formation from “chapman”, which was in much earlier use to mean an itinerant dealer, a hawker or pedlar.<sup>9</sup> It is a characteristic of this literature that it was affordable, but the derivation from “cheap” equals inexpensive is probably false. There is much to commend the view that any sort of printed book carried by a chapman can be described as a chapbook,<sup>10</sup> but there is also much to be said for the strict bibliographical definition which restricts the chapbook to a single

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Twyman, “Printed Ephemera”, in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 5, 1695–1830, ed. Michael F. Suarez, SJ, and Michael L. Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 66–82 (p. 67).

<sup>9</sup> *OED*, chap-book, *n.*; chapman, *n.* 2.

<sup>10</sup> Edward J. Cowan and Mike Paterson, *Folk in Print: Scotland’s Chapbook Heritage, 1750–1850* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007), p. 12.

sheet,<sup>11</sup> not least because it emphasizes the chapbook's intrinsic physical and intellectual affinity with the broadside.

The main genres of street literature include: ballads, songs, and poetry; chapbook "histories", legends, tales, and literary works, usually in much abridged form; books of jokes and riddles, fortune-telling and prophecy; non-fiction offering news, practical advice, and self-improvement; religious and moral tracts; the cheaper end of literature intended for children; the cheaper sorts of almanacs; and prose news-sheets. Also relevant, though not strictly as literature, are illustrations in the form of popular prints, which were produced and distributed by some of the same personnel as the foregoing items.<sup>12</sup> The relative prominence of some of these genres in the street literature scene was prone to marked shifts in the course of the long nineteenth century.

The portmanteau term "histories" requires some brief explanation. It was widely used by chapbook printers and distributors, especially in the eighteenth century, and was sometimes more or less synonymous with "chapbooks" *per se*, including genres such as jest-books and fortune-telling. It is probably at its most useful, however, when describing tales and legends, such as *Jack the Giant-Killer*, *Valentine and Orson*, and *Tom Hickathrift*; some of the well-known folktales such as *Cinderilla (sic)* and *Puss in Boots*, often in the form of collections under titles such as *Mother Goose's Tales*; and quasi-historical stories such as those of *Jane Shore*, *Fair Rosamond*, and *George Barnwell*.

\*

Bearing in mind the foregoing remarks about the range of street literature, it has to be conceded that the field has been under-researched, hence the rationale for this volume. The essays are largely concerned with those (overlapping) genres that have received the most attention: ballads and songs, and prose and verse chapbooks. A particular purpose of the collection is to situate street literature, and especially ballads and songs, within a context of production and distribution. They belong not in a rarefied realm of "folk song", but in the realm of the written word as it was produced by and for, sold by and to, and consumed by, working men and

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<sup>11</sup> F. W. Ratcliffe, "Chapbooks with Scottish Imprints in the Robert White Collection, the University Library, Newcastle upon Tyne", *The Bibliothek*, 4 (1963-66), 88-174 (p. 92).

<sup>12</sup> The standard work on the popular print, which extends to broadside iconography at large, is Sheila O'Connell, *The Popular Print in England, 1550-1850* (London: British Museum Press, 1999).

women. For that reason, for all its difficulties of definition, the description of “street literature”, grounded physically in the streets, marketplaces, and byways, remains a useful one. The chapters themselves comprise both longer surveys of the subject and some shorter case studies that explore particular aspects in greater detail.

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Figure 1



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### DAVID ATKINSON AND STEVE ROUD

On the face of it, there is a clear continuity in the production, distribution, and consumption of street literature right from its beginnings in the sixteenth century through to its demise at the beginning of the twentieth. Nevertheless, close analysis of particular periods exposes ways in which the trade was not in fact the same at all times. The essays in this volume are concentrated on the long nineteenth century, a period that probably saw the street literature trade reach its zenith, at least in terms of sheer volume, but also charted its decline during the latter years of the century. The First World War provides an end point, and the landmark ruling of 1774 that did so much to shake up the publishing business at large offers a convenient start date, albeit one that is far less precise, not least because the impact of *Donaldson v. Becket* was arguably much less marked at the street literature end of the trade. So, acknowledging that there are some real elements of continuity, it will be useful to introduce the subject with a brief résumé of the situation before 1774.

\*

#### **I. Street Literature to 1774**

##### **David Atkinson**

Between 1557 and 1695 printing in England and Wales was controlled by the Stationers' Company and was effectively restricted to London. It is in this period that street literature first becomes visible – in particular, with the much studied broadside ballads of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Printed in black-letter type, the earliest of these were mostly concerned with theological and political subjects. One of the earliest is a ballad of *The Husbandman, Doctor Martin Luther, The Pope, The*

*Cardinall* (c.1550).<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, they soon broadened out to include verses on a whole range of subjects besides, including godly ballads, ballads about social, familial, romantic, and sexual matters, battles and wars, crime and executions, voyages and discoveries, monstrous creatures, women who gave birth to rabbits or looked like pigs, earthquakes, eclipses, portents, and prophecies – a veritable mixture of fiction and (more or less) fact.<sup>2</sup> A number of the early modern ballad writers such as William Elderton, Thomas Deloney, Martin Parker, and Laurence Price have been acknowledged as literary figures. Martin Parker’s “When the king enjoys his own again”, conceived as a royalist anthem in the 1640s, had an extended later life in the service of the Jacobite cause and was eventually described by Joseph Ritson as “the most famous and popular air ever heard of in this country”.<sup>3</sup> Later in the seventeenth century, songs from the London theatres and pleasure gardens started to appear on ballad sheets. Pepys records hearing the actress Mrs Knipp sing “her little Scotch song of Barbary Allen” on 2 January 1666, suggesting that this celebrated ballad may well have originated on the stage prior to its appearance in broadside print.<sup>4</sup>

Many of the broadside ballads also include a tune direction, indicating that they were (or were intended to be, or at least could be) sung out loud. A few of the ballads taken down by folk song collectors before the First World War can be traced back to broadsides of the Tudor and early Stuart period – ballads such as “Chevy Chase”, “King Edward IV and the Tanner of Tamworth”, or “The Knight and Shepherd’s Daughter”. A curiosity that deserves mention is the appearance of printed music notation on some broadsides around the end of the seventeenth century, which is probably merely decorative in many cases, but in some instances does make musical sense. The broadsides are frequently illustrated with woodcut images, some of them reused time and again. The woodcuts are often described as

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<sup>1</sup> *The Husbandman, Doctor Martin Luther, The Pope, The Cardinall* [ESTC S126187].

<sup>2</sup> Hyder E. Rollins, “The Black-Letter Broadside Ballad”, *PMLA*, 34 (1919), 258–339, remains a valuable introduction to the early printed ballads. Angela McShane, “Ballads and Broadsides”, in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture*, vol. 1, *Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660*, ed. Joad Raymond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 339–62, makes some important distinctions between ballads of different kinds.

<sup>3</sup> W. Chappell, *The Ballad Literature and Popular Music of the Olden Time*, 2 vols (London: Chappell and Co., [1859]), pp. 434–39.

<sup>4</sup> *Barbara Allen’s Cruelty; or, The Young-Man’s Tragedy* (printed for P. Brooksby, J. Deacon, J. Blare, J. Back) [ESTC R226987].

“crude”, which some of them are, but they can also reach an impressive level of artistry using comparatively simple techniques such as cross-hatching to achieve depth and dimensionality, and the combination of images from several scenes of a ballad story into a single composition.

Ballad production during the seventeenth century became largely, though not exclusively, concentrated in the hands of the so-called Ballad Partners, a restricted, albeit continuously evolving, cartel of London booksellers/printers.<sup>5</sup> Initially constituted in 1624, the partnership was a business arrangement, rather than a monopoly granted by authority.<sup>6</sup> Ballads were distributed outside of the capital by travelling pedlars, or chapmen, who sold them, along with a whole variety of other wares, at markets and fairs.<sup>7</sup> In the 1550s, Richard Sheale combined the role of minstrel to the powerful Stanley family with that of itinerant pedlar.<sup>8</sup> At a time of rather limited literacy, especially outside of London, it is likely that melody and iconography were both important selling points.<sup>9</sup> Ballad woodcuts were pasted on to walls in cottages and ale-houses, and ballad sellers sang their wares aloud in the streets.

What is rather less clear is precisely who was buying the ballads. There is a good deal of written evidence indicating a broad appeal, but much of it

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<sup>5</sup> The term “bookseller/printer” acknowledges the ambiguities of early trade descriptions which do not clearly distinguish between printing and what would now be called publishing. See James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade, 1450–1850* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 4–5, 96, 136. By the nineteenth century firms such as those of Pitts and Catnach in London, and others elsewhere in England and Scotland, were specializing in street literature and the tendency is to refer to them simply as “printers”.

<sup>6</sup> Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 75–78, 274–78; Cyprian Blagden, “Notes on the Ballad Market in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century”, *Studies in Bibliography*, 6 (1954), 161–80.

<sup>7</sup> Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985 [1981]), pp. 111–28; Margaret Spufford, *The Great Reclotting of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and their Wares in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), esp. pp. 85–89; Margaret Spufford, “The Pedlar, the Historian and the Folklorist: Seventeenth Century Communications”, *Folklore*, 105 (1994), 13–24.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Taylor, *The Songs and Travels of a Tudor Minstrel: Richard Sheale of Tamworth* (York: York Medieval Press, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> The standard work on early modern ballad melodies is Claude M. Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad and its Music* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1966).

is rather literary in nature. Literacy is not necessarily the key factor here because it was always possible for the non-literate to gain access to printed ballads by hearing them sung or read out loud.<sup>10</sup> It is unlikely, however, that the very poor would have been able to afford even broadsides retailing for a halfpenny or a penny. The primary consumers of ballads may well have belonged less to the “poor” than to that large and heterogeneous category often designated by historians as the “middling sort”, which is by no means directly comparable with the working classes of the nineteenth century.

The Ballad Partners represent an early example of specialization in the street literature trade, but ballads are only the most intensively studied area of literature intended for popular sale and consumption. Chapbooks in prose and verse were printed alongside ballads, in many instances by the same booksellers/printers, from as early as the second half of the sixteenth century, and were likewise sold by itinerant pedlars, at prices from a penny up to maybe 4d. or 6d.<sup>11</sup> Samuel Pepys’s collection of chapbooks, formed mostly in the 1680s, can be conveniently classified into small godly books, small merry books, and histories and romances, which provides a way of describing the range of subject matter.<sup>12</sup> By the later seventeenth century ballads and songs from the theatres and pleasure gardens were being issued in small songbooks, sometimes called “garlands”, which were effectively song chapbooks, as well as on broadsides. In fact, it has been suggested that chapbooks became more important to the Ballad Partners than the broadside ballads themselves,<sup>13</sup> but it is perhaps more useful to emphasize instead the absolute continuity between the two formats.

Chapmen also sold some of the almanacs that were published in a range of formats throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,

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<sup>10</sup> Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500–1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000). On literacy in England, see David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Thomas Laqueur, “The Cultural Origins of Popular Literacy in England, 1500–1850”, *Oxford Review of Education*, 2 (1976), 255–75; R. S. Schofield, “The Measurement of Literacy in Pre-Industrial England”, in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 311–25; Lawrence Stone, “Literacy and Education in England, 1640–1900”, *Past and Present*, no. 42 (1969), 69–139; Keith Thomas, “The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England”, in *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition*, ed. Gerd Baumann (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 97–131.

<sup>11</sup> Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, pp. 266–73.

<sup>12</sup> Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories*, pp. 130–32.

<sup>13</sup> Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories*, pp. 99–100.

including chapbook-style almanacs and even some broadsides, although they could also be significantly more extensive and expensive.<sup>14</sup> Almanacs regularly included useful information such as the dates of markets and fairs, market towns, post roads, tables of distances, accounts tables, medical and farming advice, regnal tables and other chronologies. There were specialized almanacs for different occupational groups, including chapmen's almanacs, and almanacs adapted to particular localities. They also included astrological information and prognostications right throughout the period, even though as a belief system astrology was increasingly subject to mockery and satire, sometimes within the almanacs themselves.

The Stationers' Company held a patent monopoly right, granted by the crown, for the printing of almanacs up until 1775. They represented a highly profitable form of publishing and were produced in very large numbers, running into hundreds of thousands of copies annually. Although ESTC lists many titles, they still represent a low survival rate, much lower (it is believed) than for the ballads and chapbooks, which were recognized as being of greater literary and historical interest and therefore worth preserving from quite an early date. The names associated with popular almanacs, such as "Poor Robin", "Cardanus Rider", and "Old Moore", recur continually but that does not necessarily mean that the contents remained static. Although there was much recycling of material, there was also room for innovation, especially the introduction of new practical, educational, and scientific information.

Even for the ballads and chapbooks, the actual survival rate is uncertain. For the earlier part of the period estimates draw heavily on entries in the Stationers' Register, but it is not at all clear how regularly publications of the street literature kind were actually entered.<sup>15</sup> Other variables that represent further areas of uncertainty in the study of street literature include the extent of print runs, the range of geographical distribution, and the inevitable question of exactly what legitimately falls

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<sup>14</sup> Bernard Capp, *Astrology and the Popular Press: English Almanacs, 1500–1800* (London: Faber, 1979); R. C. Simmons, "ABCs, Almanacs, Ballads, Chapbooks, Popular Piety and Textbooks", in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 4, 1557–1695, ed. John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie with Maureen Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 504–13; Robin Myers, "The Stationers' Company and the Almanack Trade", in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 5, 1695–1830, ed. Michael F. Suarez, SJ, and Michael L. Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 723–35.

<sup>15</sup> There are some estimates for the sixteenth century in Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, p. 42.

within the category. The moralistic pamphlets of the late Tudor/early Stuart period, for example, or civil war pamphlets, may not have been widely sold by chapmen. Even more uncertain is the status of things like sermons in chapbook format – were they intended to be sold by chapmen as works of popular religion, or were they rather jobbing printing contracts undertaken just for the writer and their circle?

Many more ballads and chapbooks survive from the period after the restoration than before. There are numerous political ballads from the mid-century onwards – hardly surprising in light of the civil war, the Popish Plot, Monmouth’s rebellion, and the Glorious Revolution.<sup>16</sup> It is a fair assumption that street literature really did expand with the advance of literacy and as the population grew increasingly familiar with the presence of print. Indeed, it is not unreasonable to posit a mutually reinforcing relationship between the growth of literacy and the growth of popular print. In the second half of the seventeenth century, too, black-letter started to give way to more modern typefaces. There also started to appear larger chapbook-style publications such as collections of Robin Hood ballads of (typically) ninety-six pages. These are too large for strict bibliographical definition as chapbooks and yet they belong naturally with the pedlar’s wares, highlighting once again the ever-present difficulty of definition.

The lapse in 1695 of the Printing Act (also called the Licensing Act), which was in practice a much more complicated instrument than has often been assumed, brought little immediate change to the publication of street literature in England and Wales.<sup>17</sup> Printing outside of London became permissible but the economics of book production and the existence of established distribution networks meant that the book trade in the provinces remained tied to publication in London for some time. Provincial printers could undertake jobbing work, such as small works by local authors (sermons, for example), but the most important development is that they started to establish newspapers.<sup>18</sup> The *Bristol Post-Boy* and the

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<sup>16</sup> Angela McShane Jones, “‘Rime and Reason’: The Political World of the English Broadside Ballad, 1640–1689” (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Warwick, 2004); Angela J. McShane, *Political Broadside Ballads of Seventeenth-Century England: A Critical Bibliography* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> Michael Treadwell, “The Stationers and the Printing Acts at the End of the Seventeenth Century”, in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 4, 1557–1695, ed. John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie with Maureen Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 755–76.

<sup>18</sup> John Feather, *The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 1–11; C. Y. Ferdinand, “Newspapers and the Sale of Books in the Provinces”, in *The Cambridge History*

*Norwich Post* commenced publication shortly after the beginning of the new century. Meanwhile, the ballad and chapbook titles associated with the Ballad Partners continued in print and the names of the London booksellers/printers responsible for them continued to evolve. In 1712, Charles Brown and Thomas Norris made a substantial entry of such titles in the Stationers' Register, which has been interpreted as an attempt to establish a new monopoly.<sup>19</sup> However, the authority of the Stationers' Company itself was already in decline,<sup>20</sup> and it is not at all clear how effective this measure would have been in practice.

More importantly, in 1719, in partnership with Robert Raikes, William Dicey (*d.*1756) established the *St Ives Mercury*, and then the *Northampton Mercury* in 1720, followed by the *Northampton Miscellany* in 1721, and the *Gloucester Journal* in 1722.<sup>21</sup> Raikes then moved to Gloucester, while Dicey remained in Northampton where he undertook jobbing printing and sold prints and bound books but also started printing ballads, chapbooks, and cheap woodcut prints. In the meantime, Dicey's sister Elizabeth had married John Cluer (*d.*1728) who was active as a bookseller/printer in Bow Churchyard in London. Cluer's publications included books, jobbing work, ballads and chapbooks, prints, and music. According to an advertisement in the *London Journal* in 1728 it was John Cluer and his foreman Thomas Cobb who invented movable type for printing music.<sup>22</sup> After Cluer's death his widow continued to run the business along with Thomas Cobb until 1736 when it was handed over to William Dicey. In 1740, Dicey appointed his son Cluer Dicey (1714/15–75) to manage the Bow Churchyard business. A parallel operation was opened in nearby Aldermary Churchyard in 1754, and Richard Marshall had become an equal partner in the business with Cluer Dicey by 1764.

Some of the ballad and chapbook titles published by the Diceys in Northampton and then in London are the same as those previously issued by the Ballad Partners and it has been assumed (or inferred, or implied)

*of the Book in Britain*, vol. 5, 1695–1830, ed. Michael F. Suarez, SJ, and Michael L. Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 434–47.

<sup>19</sup> Robert S. Thomson, "The Development of the Broadside Ballad Trade and its Influence upon the Transmission of English Folksongs" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 1974), pp. 82, 283–87.

<sup>20</sup> Treadwell, "The Stationers and the Printing Acts", esp. pp. 771–73.

<sup>21</sup> Victor E. Neuburg, "The Diceys and the Chapbook Trade", *The Library*, 5th ser., 24 (1969), 219–31; David Stoker, "Another Look at the Dicey-Marshall Publications: 1736–1806", *The Library*, 7th ser., 15 (2014), 111–57; Timothy Clayton, "Dicey family (*per.* c.1710–c.1800)", *ODNB*.

<sup>22</sup> *London Journal*, 13 July 1728, p. 2.

that Dacey, and subsequently the Dacey/Marshall partnership, were the natural successors to the Ballad Partners and took over their copyrights and near-monopoly of the trade.<sup>23</sup> It is not at all clear, however, whether there really was such a direct transfer of ownership or whether ownership simply lapsed and was not disputed. What is evident is that the street literature business in Northampton and then in London was a natural fit with William Dacey's newspaper publishing business, not least because Dacey and Raikes had a well-established network of distribution agents and chapmen's routes to carry their newspapers right across the east and west midland counties and into parts of Wales.<sup>24</sup> Imprints on Dacey broadsides indicate that such items were sold in towns as far away as Coventry, Derby, and Leeds.<sup>25</sup>

Although the Dacey firm was the dominant London bookseller/printer producing ballads and chapbooks, they did not enjoy a total monopoly.<sup>26</sup> John Garnet was publishing ballads and song chapbooks in Sheffield perhaps as early as the 1730s. John White II published ballads and chapbooks in Newcastle and a smaller number in York. Like Dacey, White was also a newspaper proprietor and established the *Newcastle Courant* in 1711, the *York Mercury* in 1719, and the *York Courant* in 1725, and had a distribution network of booksellers and agents across the northern counties.<sup>27</sup> At least one of White's chapbooks is dated to 1711.<sup>28</sup> His

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<sup>23</sup> Among those whose statements can be read as implying such a succession are Leslie Shepard, *John Pitts, Ballad Printer of Seven Dials, London, 1765–1844* (London: Private Libraries Association, 1969), pp. 22–23; William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 340–41, 500–01; Thomson, “Development of the Broadside Ballad Trade”, pp. 112–13.

<sup>24</sup> Thomson, “Development of the Broadside Ballad Trade”, pp. 100–01.

<sup>25</sup> *An Excellent Ballad of the Life and Death of King Richard the Third* (Northampton: printed by Wm. Dacey; and sold at Mr Burnham's snuff shop, and by Mathias Dagnell, bookseller, in Aylesbury; Paul Stevens, in Bicester; Wm. Ratten, bookseller, in Coventry; Caleb Ratten, bookseller, in Harborough; Tho. Williams, bookseller, in Tring; Anthony Thorpe, in St Albans; Wm. Peachey, near St Bennet's Church, in Cambridge; Mary Timbs, in Newport Pagnell; John Timbs, in Stony Stratford; Jer. Roe, in Derby; John Hirst, printer, in Leeds; and by Churrude Brady, in St Ives) [ESTC T180800].

<sup>26</sup> Dates cited in the following paragraphs are derived from BBTI and ESTC and are subject to further refinement.

<sup>27</sup> Victoria Gardner, “John White and the Development of Print Culture in the North East of England, 1711–1769”, in *Book Trade Connections from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Centuries*, ed. John Hinks and Catherine Armstrong (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press; London: British Library, 2008), pp. 71–92.

output embraced a range of titles, including books (especially in partnership with Thomas Saint, his eventual successor), sermons and theological works, books for children, both school books and chapbooks such as *The Pleasant History of Jack Horner* in verse, pieces of jobbing printing such as official publications, and ballads and chapbooks. A feature of his publications is the presence of increasingly sophisticated illustrations, especially in the more expensive publications for children, and Thomas Saint would later become a leading publisher of children's literature with illustrations by the likes of Thomas Bewick. White also experimented with stereotyping in the 1740s in collaboration with the Edinburgh goldsmith William Ged.

In other words, White was a general bookseller/printer who also published street literature titles, and in that respect apparently differed from the Dacey firm and the Ballad Partners. There were, however, quite a number of other firms of this kind, general booksellers/printers or maybe even just jobbing printers that nonetheless issued the odd ballad or chapbook. A distinguished instance is the London bookseller Sir James Hodges, knighted in 1758, who published street literature titles alongside works of science, literature, drama, poetry, history, religion and theology, and so forth.<sup>29</sup> John Ashton observed that many of White's Newcastle chapbook (and ballad) titles were the same as those issued by the Dacey firm and made the assumption that they were therefore merely piracies, an assumption that has been frequently repeated.<sup>30</sup> Recent research suggests that this is likely to be at best an oversimplification and may well be quite untrue. ESTC lists a single broadside ballad the imprint of which links White's business in Newcastle with Dacey's in Northampton.<sup>31</sup> It is

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<sup>28</sup> *The Famous History of the Valiant London Prentice* (Newcastle: printed and sold by J. White, 1711) [ESTC T12602].

<sup>29</sup> H. R. Plomer, G. H. Bushnell, and E. R. McC. Dix, *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers Who Were at Work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1726 to 1775* ([Oxford]: Oxford University Press, for the Bibliographical Society, 1932), pp. 127–28.

<sup>30</sup> John Ashton, *Chap-books of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1882), p. ix. St Clair, *Reading Nation*, p. 341, suggests that some sort of business arrangement was more likely.

<sup>31</sup> *The Birds Lamentation* (Northampton: printed by Wm. Dacey; and sold at Mr Burnham's snuff shop, and by Mathias Dagnell, bookseller, in Aylesbury; Paul Stevens, in Bicester; William Ratten, bookseller, in Coventry; Caleb Ratten, bookseller, in Harborough; Thomas Williams, bookseller, in Tring; Anthony Thorpe, in St Albans; William Peachey, near St Bennet's Church, in Cambridge; Mary Timbs, in Newport Pagnell; John Timbs, in Stony Stratford; Jeremiah Roe, in Derby; John Hirst, printer, in Leeds; Thomas Gent, printer, in York; John White,

important to emphasize that there is still much that is not well understood about the street literature trade at this date. What the two businesses, and others across the country, did have in common was the trade in patent medicines – not least because the distribution networks for street literature, patent medicines, and newspapers proved an extremely good fit.<sup>32</sup> Eventually the Diceys were making most of their money from the medicine trade.

By the 1750s/60s, it is possible to identify significantly more booksellers/printers for whom the street literature trade was an important part of their business, both in London and in the provinces. In London, Robert Powell and then Charles Sympson operated from premises in Stonecutter Street, near Fleet Market, and Larkin How was similarly established in Petticoat Lane. Other booksellers/printers around this time for whom street literature was a major strand of their business include John Butler (Worcester), Samuel Gamidge (Worcester), William Eyres (Warrington), Samuel Harward (Tewkesbury), John Cheney (Banbury). A little later in the century and many more names can be added to the roster, such as John Turner (Coventry), John Ferraby (Hull), John Rann (Dudley), Joseph Smart (Wolverhampton), George Swindells (Manchester), the Angus family (Newcastle), and James Fowler (Salisbury). Towards the end of the century, the successors to Richard Marshall had entered the street literature trade in London, and Hannah More had commenced publishing the Cheap Repository Tracts in broadside and chapbook formats. At the same time, a bookseller/printer such as William Eyres of Warrington was also a major publisher of religious and theological, scientific and medical, literary, and historical titles, many of them of book length. A host of other general booksellers/printers across the country printed a few ballads or chapbooks alongside other titles, while some other names are known more or less exclusively from the occasional street literature title.

Whether the seemingly rather slow growth of the street literature trade during the first half of the eighteenth century was a consequence of the dominance of the Dicey firm in London and Northampton, and of White in

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printer, in Newcastle upon Tyne; and by Churrude Brady, in St Ives) [ESTC N15639].

<sup>32</sup> Feather, *Provincial Book Trade*, pp. 83–84; Gardner, “John White and the Development of Print Culture in the North East of England”, p. 87; Peter Isaac, “Pills and Print”, in *Medicine, Mortality and the Book Trade*, ed. Robin Myers and Michael Harris (Folkestone: St Paul’s Bibliographies; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 1998), pp. 25–47; Stoker, “Another Look at the Dicey-Marshall Publications”, pp. 115–16.