

CENTRE FOR EDITORIAL AND INTERTEXTUAL RESEARCH
(CARDIFF CORVEY: READING THE ROMANTIC TEXT)

Project Report

Number 2

**BRITISH FICTION, 1800–1829:
A DATABASE OF PRODUCTION AND RECEPTION**

Peter Garside and Anthony Mandal

I. AIMS

The early decades of the nineteenth century represent a period of unparalleled development in the novel. While many of the ideological battles surrounding fiction had been fought in the charged atmosphere of the 1790s, the anti-Jacobin reaction to the polemical aspects of the novel necessitated a reinterpretation of the role of the novel at the turn of the century. Writers such as Maria Edgeworth and Hannah More, and later Walter Scott and Jane Austen, did much to make this period significant. However, the era was also the time of less notable, but still prolific, writers, such as Mary Meeke, the Porter sisters, Anthony Frederick Holstein, and Barbara Hofland.

The initial aim of the database project was to create a tool to allow a broad and sophisticated level of analysis of over two thousand titles from the period 1800–29. Fields allowing analysis of gender distributions, publisher popularity, authorial status, prices, translations, etc. were created during the first phase of the database. As well as enabling the study of broad statistical data, fuller bibliographical information can also be consulted on a per-record basis. Thus, analysis can take place on two levels: the general (for spans of years, types of fiction, specific authors) and the individual (studies of individual texts, with rich information about the work concerned).

II. METHODOLOGY

The first phase of this project has involved extrapolating basic bibliographical details of over 2,200 fictional works from the period. This led to the creation of specific fields forming part of an Access 97 database, which were divided into different types of categories:

Main Fields

The main fields of the database refer particularly to the bibliographical details of the titles concerned, and can be analysed in a variety of ways from a record-by-record basis to a full statistical gathering over the three-decade period.

- ☞ *Author and Date*: provide standardised information of authors, including variant spellings and married names, as well as the year of first publication for the title concerned
- ☞ *Title*: both full titles (for close examination) and short-titles (for quick consultation) are provided
- ☞ *Gender* follows seven categories split along two axes: i) gender type—male, female, unknown; ii) status of gender ascription for male and female—named (i.e. a gender-specific, authentic name appears on title-page), identified (gender has been ascribed through scholarship, authorial chains, etc.), implied (gender has been defined through unidentified pseudonyms, generic phrases such as ‘By the daughter of a clergyman’, ‘By an officer ...’, and so on). The *Broad Gender* field offers a summary of the (detailed) Gender field by condensing these variations into simple Male, Female, Unknown categories for a more general analysis
- ☞ *Authorial Status* records whether a title was published anonymously, pseudonymously, or with the author’s name explicitly stated.
- ☞ *Established Gender*: unlike the Broad Gender field, this simply records texts about which modern scholarship can be absolutely sure as far as authorial gender is concerned (i.e. ‘By a Lady’ does not provide enough evidence that a woman wrote the text, and is therefore treated as Unknown). This is most useful when combined with the Authorial Status field to provide an accurate record of how many men and women we can be sure wrote were writing using their own name or not
- ☞ *Subscription* details list the number of subscribers and page numbers of subscription lists featured in the work concerned
- ☞ *Translation* details provide information on the name of the translator of a foreign work into English; whether the work is an authenticated foreign original or whether it is an ‘implied’ translation; and first located translations into French and/or German
- ☞ Additional fields give details of *all known prices, reviews, library holdings, further editions*, and miscellaneous textual-bibliographical *notes*

Publisher Fields

The Publisher fields represent detailed aspects of the text as a manufactured item in the publishing world, rather than as an authored work. It was necessary to provide a separate section for this aspect of the database because there are cases of a single title being issued by different publishers in different forms at different prices.

- ☞ *Primary publisher*: the main publishing partnership (i.e. those that generally appear at the beginning of the publisher's imprint) with the fullest names of partners is provided as a field
- ☞ *Concern*: for the sake of standardised searches the varying partnerships which constituted ventures are also subsumed into a more generic field, allowing continuity of searches (e.g. William Lane, the Minerva Press, A. K. Newman, are all grouped under 'Minerva' allowing users to search all Minerva titles without worrying about the changing nature of the firm)
- ☞ Volume details include *number of volumes*, *pagination*, and *format* (octavo, duodecimo, etc.)
- ☞ *Price* details for individual volumes are taken as a subset of the all known prices field, where sources indicate a preponderance or agreement as to price (e.g. two out of three reviews agree on a price, which is then recorded in this field). Prices have been converted into decimal figures, for the sake of statistical analysis: e.g. 10s 6d is entered as 10.5, etc. In total, 83.5% of all records in the database have an 'agreed' price
- ☞ *Secondary publishers* (cases where firms have played a subsidiary role in a publishing enterprise, and appear after the first firm on the publisher's imprint) are also recorded, so that users can see which publishers played 'second fiddle' more often than others (e.g. 'A. K. Newman & Co' was secondary publisher in only a negligible number of cases as compared to well over 500 titles where his firm was primary)

III. ANALYSING DATA

The first phase of data entry is now complete, and the current records are closed. The flexibility of Access 97 allows information to be parsed in a number of complementary ways.

Forms

Forms display material on a record-by-record basis, and allow users to examine each title on an individual basis (e.g. see Figs 1a and 1b). Because forms can be designed relatively quickly, they can display full or partial details as the user requires.

Standard *searches* can be made in any field: for instance, users can search for keywords in titles, author names, publishers, and so forth.

Forms also allow the application of *Filters*, which enable users to specify criteria in fields on the form in any combination: the application will then search through all the records and only return those which follow these conditions.

FIG 1A. Forms allow users to view and manipulate data in a number of ways. In this example, a tabbed system is used with related fields grouped in separate pages: Main, Publication Details, Formatting/Price, Translations, and Notes.

For instance, a user could fill in a form to return the following details: All Female-gendered authors published by Longmans after 1810. The database would then display each individual record for analysis at whatever level of detail the form has been designed. Filters can be applied on records which have already been filtered to provide an even more localised level of specificity. Filters can also be saved as queries (see below) for use later.

Queries

Queries offer a far more sophisticated degree of analysis than the simpler forms, and tend to return data on a larger scale. They can be constructed either to return information such as bibliographical details (e.g. author names, titles, publishers), or more significantly statistical information (e.g. total works by female authors; numbers of titles published within specific period; maximum, minimum, average, most frequent prices of texts, etc.). See Fig 2 for an example of a simple query design.

Queries can be constructed by selecting the relevant fields for analysis from a list, specifying conditions, and the ways in which the data should be analysed. The usual method would employ a simple query, which returns the data in list form (see Fig 3a, overleaf), or one which seeks to return statistical data such as totals, percentages, etc. within specific categories (see Fig 3b).

FIG 1B. This second example of a form contains all the details for each record on one sheet. While not particularly suitable for viewing data, it is ideal for the actual process of data-entry itself.

Field:	Year	Broad Gender	ID
Table:	Main Listing	Main Listing	Main Listing
Total:	Group By	Group By	Count
Crosstab:	Row Heading	Column Headin	Value
Sort:			
Criteria:			
or:			

FIG 2. A simple query design, which surveys annual totals of output by gender.

Users can also employ *Boolean operators* (AND, OR, NOT) to include and exclude different criteria: e.g. a query can be set up for all titles in the 1820s by non-male authors, published by Longmans or Colburn, with the word 'domestic' in the title-page).

If an even more sophisticated level of analysis is necessary than the usual query boxes, complex searches can be created using *Structured Query Language* (SQL), a standard way of constructing database queries. By entering an appropriately organised SQL statement, users can return detailed statistical figures with complex selection procedures, such as the percentage of women writers from the 1810s using pseudonyms, as they figured in the London and Edinburgh markets. The more simplistic example of an SQL statement below actually returns the annual totals of foreign works translated into English, and sorted by gender ('Main Listing' refers to the table containing the *Main Fields* listed in section 2):

```
TRANSFORM Count([Main Listing].ID) AS CountOfID
```

```
SELECT [Main Listing].Year
FROM [Main Listing]
WHERE ((([Main Listing].[Implied
Translations From]) Is Not Null)) OR
((([Main Listing].[Translations From]) Is
Not Null))
GROUP BY [Main Listing].Year
PIVOT [Main Listing].Gender;
```

Reports

Summaries of queries can also be prepared for output—whether as printed copy or as HTML pages ready for the web. Access enables this through the use of Reports, which can be designed on a single page as simply as forms, while running for hundreds of pages once the data has been processed through the forms. A typical example of this usage in ongoing research has been the providing of checklists with Author, Year, Short-Title, and Publisher details in order to examine the output by the top five publishers of the period.

Author	Year	Short Title	Concern
MEEKE, Mary	1819	VEILED PROTECTRESS, THE	Minerva
MOORE, Edward	1811	SIR RALPH DE BIGOD	Minerva
MOORE, Edward	1817	MYSTERIES OF HUNGARY, THE	Minerva
MOSSE, Henrietta Rouviere	1812	ARRIVALS FROM INDIA	Minerva
MOSSE, Henrietta Rouviere	1817	BRIDE AND NO WIFE, A	Minerva
PARKER, Emma	1810	SOLDIER'S OFFSPRING, A	Minerva
PARKER, Emma	1811	FITZ-EDWARD	Minerva
PILKINGTON, Mary	1814	NOVICE, THE	Minerva
PILKINGTON, Mary	1815	CELEBRITY	Minerva
ROCHE, Regina Maria	1810	HOUSES OF OSMA AND ALMERIA, THE	Minerva
ROCHE, Regina Maria	1813	MONASTERY OF ST COLUMB, THE	Minerva
ROCHE, Regina Maria	1814	TRECOTHICK BOWER	Minerva
ROSS, Mrs	1811	COUSINS, THE	Minerva
ROSS, Mrs	1813	MARCHIONESS, THE	Minerva
ROSS, Mrs	1813	STRANGERS OF LINDENFELDT, THE	Minerva
ROSS, Mrs	1814	MODERN CALYPSO, THE	Minerva
ROSS, Mrs	1815	PAIRED - NOT MATCHED	Minerva
ROSS, Mrs	1815	FAMILY ESTATE, THE	Minerva
ROSS, Mrs	1817	BALANCE OF COMFORT, THE	Minerva
SCOTT, Caroline	1816	HERMIONE	Minerva
SELDEN, Catharine [also Catherine]	1817	VILLASANTELLA	Minerva
SLEATH, Eleanor	1810	NOCTURNAL MINSTREL, THE	Minerva
SLEATH, Eleanor	1811	PYRENEAN BANDITTI	Minerva
SMITH, Catherine	1811	CALEDONIAN BANDIT, THE	Minerva
SMITH, Catherine	1815	BAROZZI	Minerva
SMITH, M?	1819	FRANCES	Minerva
SPENSER, Arthur	1819	ISKANDER	Minerva

FIG 3A. This screen capture shows a part of a comprehensive listing of all short-titles published in the 1810s by the Minerva Press, arranged alphabetically by author.

Manipulating the Results

Once the user has acquired the data needed from Access, it is a simple matter of exporting into a suitable package as requirements demand. If the material is to be further examined it can be exported (at the click of a button) as a spreadsheet into Excel 97, which is far more flexible and sophisticated than Access as far as statistical analysis is concerned. These spreadsheet data can then be used as the basis for creating graphs to illustrate trends, preponderance, etc. The graphs which feature in our *Cardiff Corvey* articles have been constructed using this procedure. The examples which follow also demonstrated (albeit at a rather simplistic level) the kinds of information which can be acquired from the database.

Year	Female	Male	Unknown
1800	39	28	14
1801	43	18	11
1802	28	20	13
1803	33	35	11
1804	30	35	8
1805	34	29	12
1806	37	21	12
1807	31	31	7
1808	50	41	20
1809	37	31	11
1810	49	22	18
1811	37	32	11
1812	33	16	17
1813	38	19	6
1814	40	16	5
1815	24	17	13
1816	31	15	13
1817	30	16	9
1818	29	20	13
1819	32	19	22
1820	26	33	11
1821	26	33	16

FIG 3B. This extract displays the results of the query design shown in Fig 2.

If more detailed information, with less of a statistical bent, is required, then reports can be exported as rich-text documents as simply as the transfer into Excel. These documents can then be used in any word processing package for incorporation into studies, checklists, and so on. Again reports can also be exported as HTML documents for use on the web. The checklist accompanying the report on our Corvey Microfiche Edition (CME) cataloguing project, which employs a similar system of data-keeping as our fiction database, was presented using this function.

Some Examples

QUERY 1: This first request from the database took less than two minutes to construct and run: it requests the top ten female novelists during 1800–29 whose own names appeared on first edition title-pages. It also lists the total numbers of their works published this way.

1. GENLIS, Stéphanie Félicité, Comtesse de..... 17	6. MEEKE, Mary..... 11
2. WARD, Catherine George..... 17	7. ROCHE, Regina Maria..... 10
3. HOFLAND, Barbara..... 12	8. OPIE, Amelia Alderson..... 9
4. STANHOPE, Louisa Sydney..... 12	9. PORTER, Anna Maria..... 9
5. HARVEY, Jane..... 12	10. MOSSE, Henrietta Rouviere..... 9

The results are interesting because if the top ten female novelists were required, whether they published pseudonymously, anonymously, or under their own names, Anna Maria Porter and Henrietta Mosse fall into 11th and 13th places respectively, with ten titles each in total. In fact, many of the figures are rearranged, with Barbara Hofland at the top, followed by Mary Meeke.

QUERY 2: A user can easily request a listing of all the works of a particular author by dates of publication and publisher through another simple database query: additionally a query can list the main holding library for the source text (here the presence of first editions in the Corvey Microfiche Edition (CME) is listed with an asterisk followed by the ISBN). In this case, ‘Ann[e] of Swansea’ (i.e. Anne Julia Kemble Hatton):

1. CAMBRIAN PICTURES (1810. London. Kerby, Edward)
2. SICILIAN MYSTERIES (1812. London. Colburn, Henry) *CME 3-628-48690-4
3. CONVICTION (1814. London. Minerva: Newman, Anthony King; & Co) *CME 3-628-48744-7
4. SECRET AVENGERS (1815. London. Minerva: Newman, Anthony King; & Co) *CME 3-628-48805-2
5. CHRONICLES OF AN ILLUSTRIOUS HOUSE (1816. London. Minerva: Newman, Anthony King; & Co) *CME 3-628-48743-9
6. GONZALO DE BALDIVIA (1817. London. Minerva: Newman, Anthony King; & Co) *CME 3-628-48802-8
7. SECRETS IN EVERY MANSION (1818. London. Minerva: Newman, Anthony King; & Co) *CME 3-628-48806-0
8. CESARIO ROSALBA (1819. London. Minerva: Newman, Anthony King; & Co) *CME 3-628-48742-0
9. LOVERS AND FRIENDS (1821. London. Minerva: Newman, Anthony King; & Co) *CME 3-628-48804-4
10. GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY (1822. London. Minerva: Newman, Anthony King; & Co) *CME 3-628-48803-6
11. WOMAN'S A RIDDLE (1824. London. Minerva: Newman, Anthony King; & Co) *CME 3-628-48789-7
12. DEEDS OF THE OLDEN TIME (1826. London. Minerva: Newman, Anthony King; & Co) *CME 3-628-48797-8
13. UNCLE PEREGRINE'S HEIRESS (1828. London. Minerva: Newman, Anthony King; & Co) *CME 3-628-48788-9

The user could easily request far more detailed information for these titles, such as the full title as it appears on the title-page, further editions, translations, etc.

QUERY 3 (FIG 4): The final example shows how the database can again be used as the basis of complex and/or significant analysis of broad sweeps of data from the period. In this case, a graph of price fluctuations has been calculated, showing the minimum, maximum, and average prices per volume. A query requesting analysis of the Year field followed by the Min, Max, and Average options for an expression Price/Vol was run, imported into Excel 97, and a graph was created from this data.

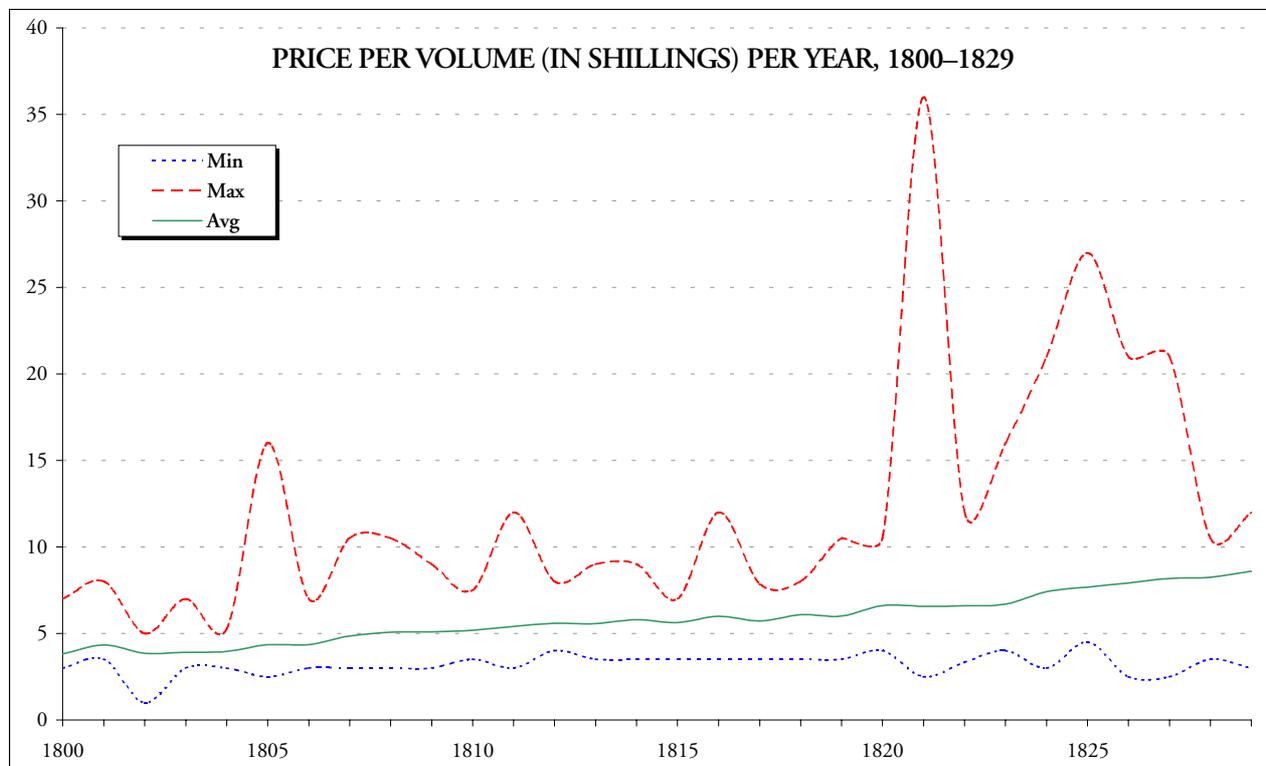


FIG 4. EXAMPLE GRAPH EXTRAPOLATED FROM THE DATABASE

IV. PHASE TWO AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The first phase of the database project, involving the entry of major bibliographical data for each title, was completed early in 1999 after two years' work. There are a few minor elements of data entered from the first phase that could be developed more appropriately for statistical analysis. For instance, our Translation and Further Editions fields at the moment are simply entered as notes: an appropriate forward move would be to split the information contained in these into separate fields, as with our Publisher category, specifying Year, Place of Publication, and Title. However, this is a matter of a few days' work, and represents merely a neatening up of past matter.

The main thrust of future development, however, will be towards the individual records themselves, in terms of production and especially readership. In May 1999 a proposal made by the Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research to develop a second phase was rated Alpha Plus by the Arts and Humanities Research Board, resulting in the award of a two-year grant.

The aim of Phase Two will be divided into a first year of data-collection and a second of data-processing. To this end a post for a Research Associate who would be responsible, from January 2000, in the first year for gathering pertinent information is now available (see section 5 for more details). This would involve the examination of a variety of sources for information which would then be added to the records as appropriate, in order to build on our perceptions of the presentation of and reaction to fiction of the early nineteenth century. Sources marked for examination include the following:

- ☞ Details of holdings in *circulating library catalogues*: the project already holds xeroxes of a substantial number belonging to the period
- ☞ *Subscription lists*: the project has xeroxes of more than 60 lists
- ☞ *Reviews*: this new phase of the project will enable inclusion of material from a wider band of contemporary journals
- ☞ *Newspaper* announcements and advertisements
- ☞ *Publishing papers*: details from archives such as the Longman Papers (the microfilms of which are being purchased by the Centre) concerning print runs, copies sold, etc.
- ☞ *Anecdotal information*: collected from contemporary memoirs, etc.

In terms of miscellaneous additions, it is our aim to also improve the database by the possible inclusion, whenever possible, of information such as biographical details, review quotations, full transcriptions of publisher imprints and printer colophons (in addition to the standardised versions we have entered at present), facsimiles from title pages, and other significant matter (e.g. illustrations), etc. As well as this, we would improve on our user interface, so that standard searches can be made by non-specialist users with as much ease as possible.

Our aims at this stage are clear and appropriately narrowed, however, and we are focused on developing the aspects of reception we have detailed above before proceeding—in the longer term—on the inclusion of further materials.

V. RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

Below is duplicated provisional information relating to the appointment of a Research Associate who would be responsible for much of the first year's research (directed by Dr Peter Garside and in collaboration with Anthony Mandal). Fuller details about the post, and updates once the appointment has been made, are available from both of the Centre's websites: CEIR itself <<http://www.cf.ac.uk/uwc/encap/ceir>> and *Cardiff Corvey* <<http://www.cf.ac.uk/uwc/encap/corvey>>.

The Post

Applications are invited for a postdoctoral Research Associate to work on a project 'British Fiction, 1800–1829: A Database of Production and Reception History', at the Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research under the direction of Dr Peter Garside.

The person appointed should be computer-literate and either able or willing to learn to operate a database constructed in Microsoft Access 97. A research interest in fiction of the early nineteenth century as well as an understanding of bibliographical techniques would be advantageous. The successful candidate will be based in the Centre's project room at Cardiff, but will also be expected to travel to other research libraries.

The Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research (CEIR)

CEIR is a new academic group established in 1998, with facilities which combine traditional scholarly skills—such as bibliography and textual editing—with recent developments in Information Technology, multimedia authoring, and online publishing. The Centre is chaired by Dr Peter Garside, a specialist in Romantic studies, and the interests of other members of the Centre range from Mediaeval Studies to postmodern aesthetics.

The Centre provides a focus for various scholarly disciplines in a number of ways; recent projects include the following:

- ☞ A pilot scheme to *digitise* and edit rare works of fiction from the Romantic era, to be mounted as searchable texts on CD-ROM

- œ The construction of a *database of fiction* detailing some 2,250 unique titles from the Romantic era, and including statistical information on publishers, translations, gender, authorship and reviews
- œ The *cataloguing* of the Corvey Microfiche Edition of early nineteenth-century literary works, acquired by Cardiff University in 1997
- œ A web-based journal *Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text* <<http://www.cf.ac.uk/uwc/encap/corvey>>

More information about these and other schemes is available within the CEIR website <<http://www.cf.ac.uk/uwc/encap/ceir>>.

COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

This article is copyright © 1999 Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research, and is the result of the independent labour of the scholar or scholars credited with authorship. The material contained in this document may be freely distributed, as long as the origin of information used has been properly credited in the appropriate manner (e.g. through bibliographic citation, etc.).

REFERRING TO THIS ARTICLE

GARSIDE, P. D. and A. A. MANDAL. 'British Fiction, 1800–1829: A Database of Production and Reception', *Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text* 3 (September 1999). Online: Internet (date accessed): <<http://www.cf.ac.uk/encap/corvey/articles/database/database.html>>.

CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

Peter Garside (MA Cantab., PhD Cantab., AM Harvard) is Reader in English Literature at Cardiff University and Chair of the Centre for Editorial and Intertextual Research. As well as specialising in Romantic and Augustan literature, he has recently completed work on a *Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles* (with James Raven and Rainer Schöwerling; OUP forthcoming), and is currently editing James Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*.

His other involvements include participation in the advisory board of the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels (from 1985) and the Stirling/South Carolina Edition of the Collected Works of James Hogg (from 1991), as well as editing for both projects. He has published widely in the field of Scottish fiction, publishing history, and Romantic literature, and recent publications relevant to fiction of the Romantic period include a chapter on 'Romantic Gothic', in *Literature of the Romantic Period*, ed. Michael O'Neill (Oxford, 1998), pp. 315–40.

Anthony Mandal (BA Dunelm, MA Wales) is a PhD student at Cardiff University, examining the literary and publishing world faced by Jane Austen in the 1810s. His thesis seeks to consider a number of pertinent questions: What were contemporary novelists writing? How easy was it for a woman writing in the nineteenth century? How successful was Austen compared to her peers? How astute was she, entering the literary marketplace at a time when female authors were at their most prolific? Answering these questions might lead to Austen being considered, not as an isolated author, but as one who was very much a part of the publishing world of the early nineteenth century.

Published contributions include entries in the forthcoming *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* (3rd edn.), and *New Dictionary of National Biography*, as well as articles in Fitzroy-Dearborn's *Encyclopedia of the Novel* (1999). Other main interests include information technology and the Internet, and how these advances can be combined with traditional scholarly skills to produce dynamic tools for researchers.