

Book trade communities in English provincial towns: 1695-1850

This research, supported by a British Academy Small Research Grant, aims to explore the extent and nature of communities in the book trade from the lapse of the Printing (Licensing) Act in 1695 (which removed restrictions on provincial printing) to 1850, with a particular focus on towns in the English Midlands and East Anglia.

Evidence will be sought towards an overview of the topic and a number of case-studies will be investigated in more depth in order to illustrate the range of communities and to formulate an agenda for further research on specific aspects of book trade communities.

The main types of community to be studied are:

- within the book trade
- between the book trade and authors
- between the book trade and readers

It is hoped that this research will make a significant contribution to the history of the book trade (part of the thriving field of book history) and also – given the importance of the book trade and print culture in the dissemination of ideas – to intellectual history. The research will benefit from being carried out within an established centre specialising in urban history.

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