

# “Distinguished Poets from Altogether Other Spheres”

Evidence of Literary Networks in *Poetry and Audience*

Kathryn Jenner (Leeds Poetry 1950-1980 Project)

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*Poetry and Audience* was established in the autumn term of 1953 by Ralph Maud, an undergraduate student in what was the Department of English Literature at the University of Leeds. A short editorial in the first issue stated “We hope to be serious about poetry – without being ‘damn solemn’ (in the words of Hemingway),” and invited contributions from “all those who feel they can go along with us in this.”<sup>1</sup> From its early days, the magazine attracted contributions from poets who had already established their reputations, and those who were soon to do so. Bonamy Dobrée, in his foreword to the *Poetry and Audience 1953-60* anthology noted the contributions made to the magazine during its first seven years by Gregory Fellows in Poetry, staff and students at the University of Leeds, and “distinguished poets from altogether other spheres, who evidently thought the venture worthwhile.”<sup>2</sup> The Introduction to the anthology of undergraduate poetry produced to mark the tenth anniversary of *Poetry and Audience* in 1963 also remarks on the contributions sent to the magazine by contributors from outside the University “by some of the most highly regarded poets of Britain and America.”<sup>3</sup> How did a penny-a-week, cyclostyled, student poetry journal come to attract such interest? Focussing on the first two decades of *Poetry and Audience*, this paper examines some of the literary networks connected with poets who held the Gregory Fellowship in Poetry at Leeds, and other poets with connections to the University of Leeds, who may have been influential.

The founding of *Poetry and Audience* occurred not long after the implementation of the Gregory Fellowship at the University of Leeds. The scheme provided for up to three Fellows, usually in Poetry, Painting and Sculpture, to be informally attached to the University as a means of broadening and enhancing student and, in turn, community experience of the arts. John Heath-Stubbs held the Fellowship in Poetry when *Poetry and Audience* was first published; he had already, by this stage, published four collections of poetry in addition to a number of translations. His association with the magazine is evident from the first issue: his poem ‘Alexander Pope’ appears as the first poem, and he is credited as being an editorial adviser. He continued in this role up until the end of his tenure of the Fellowship in 1955, and in doing so established the precedent of a close association between Gregory Fellows in Poetry and the magazine. Writing in December 1955, the Editorial

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<sup>1</sup> Ralph Maud, ‘Editorial,’ *Poetry and Audience*, vol. 1, no. 1 (6 November 1953), p. [1].

<sup>2</sup> Bonamy Dobrée, ‘Foreword,’ *Poetry and Audience 1953-60: An Anthology* [Leeds: University of Leeds, 1960], p. [i]. Although just over half of the anthology’s content consisted of Leeds student poetry, around one quarter of contributors were poets with no direct links to the University.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Introduction,’ *10: Leeds Undergraduate Poetry from the First Ten Years of Poetry & Audience* (Leeds: The University Bibliographical Press, 1963), p. [1].

Board acknowledged the importance of this association to *Poetry and Audience*'s success, commenting on Heath-Stubbs' "friendly interest and professional advice," and the part he played in assuring "the transition from an uncertain, if brave, venture to a stable and thriving magazine."<sup>4</sup> By the time the next Gregory Fellow, Thomas Blackburn, took up his fellowship at the University, he had already submitted poems to and been published in *Poetry and Audience*.<sup>5</sup>

John Heath-Stubbs and Thomas Blackburn knew each other prior to either of them becoming Gregory Fellows at Leeds. Heath-Stubbs mentions Blackburn as a friend in his autobiography, *Hindsights*; Blackburn was also amongst those Heath-Stubbs recommended to Bonamy Dobrée, Chair of English Literature at Leeds and a member of the Gregory Fellowships Advisory Committee, when asked to suggest candidates to succeed him as the Fellow in Poetry.<sup>6</sup> Heath-Stubbs, like Blackburn and other Fellows in Poetry to come, had friendships and connections with many other poets. A closer examination of the external and "established" poets who contributed to *Poetry and Audience* reveals some of these networks.

During the time John Heath-Stubbs held the Gregory Fellowship, Kingsley Amis and Philip Larkin contributed to and were published in *Poetry and Audience*. Amis and Larkin had both studied at St John's College, Oxford in the 1940s, and were part of a group of poets centred on the college. Heath-Stubbs also attended Oxford around this time, although he was a student at Queen's College. His primary circle of friends and contacts in terms of poetry comprised a group including Sidney Keyes and Michael Meyer, but he also came to know Larkin quite well.<sup>7</sup> When his collection *A Charm Against the Toothache* was published in 1954, he suggested Larkin as a reviewer. The review Larkin wrote was unexpectedly scathing, but appeared in *Poetry and Audience* in June of that year. Larkin and Amis had already had poems published in *Poetry and Audience* by this time, both in January 1954. It seems most likely that Heath-Stubbs was the connection that led these then relatively unknown writers to contribute to the magazine.

The connection between the Gregory Fellows in Poetry and some of the external contributors to *Poetry and Audience* perhaps becomes more apparent during Thomas Blackburn's tenure of the Fellowship (1956-1957). Contributors to the magazine during this time included George Barker, Patricia Beer, Charles Causley, Michael Hamburger, Stevie Smith and Vernon Watkins. George Barker knew both Thomas Blackburn and John Heath-Stubbs. Blackburn is described in Robert Fraser's biography of Barker as one of his "protégés;" and Barker

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<sup>4</sup> 'Poetry and Audience & the Gregory Fellowship,' *Poetry & Audience*, vol. 3, no. 8 (2 December 1955), p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Blackburn's poems 'Into My Nothingness' and 'The Unabiding' were published in *Poetry and Audience*, vol. 3, no. 1 (14 October 1955), pp. 4-6. Blackburn is described as "the new Gregory Fellow in Poetry." At this point, he had accepted the post, but not yet taken it up.

<sup>6</sup> John Heath-Stubbs, *Hindsights: An Autobiography* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1993), p. 198 and p. 202.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

had unsuccessfully applied for the Gregory Fellowship twice, on the occasions when Heath-Stubbs and then Blackburn were appointed.<sup>8</sup> Barker came to give a poetry reading to students at Leeds quite early on in Blackburn's Gregory Fellowship. Blackburn described the occasion in a letter to Michael Hamburger, also a friend, as Barker having been “up to address the troops.”<sup>9</sup> Barker was a well-established poet by this time, having published some thirteen collections and pamphlets. Five poems by Barker were published in *Poetry and Audience* in December 1956. He contributed further poems to the magazine during his tenure of the Granada Fellowship in Creative Writing at the University of York. His friend David Wright, also a contemporary of John Heath-Stubbs at Oxford, held the Gregory Fellowship at this time.<sup>10</sup>

Patricia Beer and Charles Causley were also known to Thomas Blackburn. Causley and Blackburn were both published by Erica Marx's Hand and Flower Press; two poems by Causley were published in *Poetry and Audience* in October 1956. Correspondence between Blackburn and Beer held in Leeds University Library indicates that Blackburn may have been something of a mentor to her: writing in January 1957, Beer responds to Blackburn's suggestion that she should start collecting poems together for a first volume.<sup>11</sup> ‘The Merman,’ published in *Poetry and Audience* in November 1957, was included in her first collection, *Loss of the Magyar* (1959).<sup>12</sup>

Like Causley and Blackburn, Michael Hamburger was also published by the Hand and Flower Press in the early 1950s. Hamburger and Blackburn first met in Soho in the 1940s, having been introduced to each other by Dylan Thomas at one of his readings.<sup>13</sup> According to Hamburger, they were to see a great deal of each other in the following years; the importance of the friendship is evidenced by the extent of correspondence between them held in the Blackburn and Hamburger collections at Leeds University Library. Hamburger's poem ‘Palinode’ appeared in *Poetry and Audience* in October 1956. At this stage he had published three volumes of translations, and two poetry collections of his own. Blackburn was very keen on ‘Palinode’, and had included it in a poetry broadcast for the BBC's Third Programme prior to its appearance in *Poetry and Audience*.<sup>14</sup> He later asked Hamburger if he could publish the poem in “a small university poetry magazine we have [at Leeds],” explaining “it [the magazine] just circulates in the university but I'd like them [the students] to

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Fraser, *The Chameleon Poet: A Life of George Barker* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2001), p. 309.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Blackburn to Michael Hamburger, 27 February 1956. Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection MS 20c Hamburger.

<sup>10</sup> Untitled poems by Barker were published in *Poetry and Audience* vol. 14, no. 9 (9 December 1966) and vol. 15, no. 1 (13 October 1967). David Wright held the Gregory Fellowship in Poetry from 1965 to 1967.

<sup>11</sup> Patricia Beer to Thomas Blackburn, 30 January 1957. Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection MS 20c Blackburn/5/1/9.

<sup>12</sup> *Poetry and Audience* is not listed in the acknowledgments for this work.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Hamburger, *A Mug's Game: Intermittent Memoirs 1924-1954* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1973), p. 240.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Blackburn to Michael Hamburger, [undated]. Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection MS 20c Blackburn/5/1/26. The date and title of the broadcast are not known.

know your work.”<sup>15</sup> Hamburger also came to read at Leeds during Blackburn’s fellowship. This not only shows Blackburn, in his role as Gregory Fellow, working to broaden Leeds students’ exposure to contemporary poetry, but perhaps gives some indication of the importance of the Gregory Fellows in soliciting submissions to *Poetry and Audience* from both established and “up and coming” poets, and subsequently raising its profile in the wider literary world.

Vernon Watkins was acquainted with both Thomas Blackburn and Michael Hamburger; Blackburn and Hamburger were to visit Watkins at his home in Wales together, shortly after Blackburn’s tenure of the Gregory Fellowship came to an end.<sup>16</sup> Watkins and Blackburn were in correspondence during the course of his Fellowship as a result of the latter’s involvement in the editing of the 1957 P.E.N. *New Poems* anthology. Watkins’s poem ‘Camelot’ was included in the anthology, and in May 1957 was also published in *Poetry and Audience*. The poem was later included in Watkins’s collection *Cypress and Acacia* (1959).

Blackburn’s connection with Stevie Smith is less clear, although it is known that she corresponded quite extensively with other writers and creative artists. Her poems ‘The Passing Cloud’ and ‘The Small Lady’ were published in *Poetry and Audience* in November 1956; the former was included in her collection *Not Waving But Drowning* (1959). A postcard sent from Smith to Blackburn during his time in Leeds records her assenting to the use of “any poems you like for your magazine.”<sup>17</sup>

Jon Silkin succeeded Thomas Blackburn as Gregory Fellow in Poetry in 1958. He had established and edited his own magazine, *Stand*, in London between 1952 and 1957, and was also a co-editor of the P.E.N. *New Poems* anthology for 1960.<sup>18</sup> Through the combination of contacts made through his work as an editor, and contact with other poets more generally, he appears to have attracted a number of submissions to *Poetry and Audience* from established poets in Britain and further afield, including Gene Baro, Alan Brownjohn, A.C. Jacobs, Gerda Meyer, Ewart Milne, and Iain Crichton Smith.

Correspondence in the Stand Archive at Leeds University Library indicates that Alan Brownjohn had submitted poems to Silkin to consider for inclusion in the 1960 P.E.N. anthology. Their relationship predates this, Brownjohn having been published by Silkin in *Stand* in 1956. Writing to Brownjohn in September 1959, Silkin expresses regret that none of his poems would be included in the P.E.N. anthology. By this stage, three

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<sup>15</sup> Thomas Blackburn to Michael Hamburger, [undated; postmarked 10 October 1956]. Brotherton Collection MS 20c Blackburn/5/1/26.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Hamburger gives an account of this visit in *A Mug’s Game* (1973), p. 257.

<sup>17</sup> Stevie Smith to Thomas Blackburn, [undated; 1956]. Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection MS 20c Blackburn/5/1/68.

<sup>18</sup> Silkin revived *Stand* from Leeds in 1960, with the backing of members of the Department of English Literature, and financial aid from Leeds and Bradford businessmen.

poems by Brownjohn had appeared in *Poetry and Audience*: issues published in October 1958 include ‘Snow in Bromley,’ ‘Facing Outwards,’ and ‘For a Journey,’ all of which were later included in his collection *The Railings* (1961). It is possible that Silkin was influential in their submission to the magazine. Brownjohn later stated that he had a “high regard” for *Poetry and Audience*, and that he saw it as being “a very valuable feature of literary activity at Leeds.”<sup>19</sup> He recollected that it was, most probably, whoever was editor of *Poetry and Audience* at the time who approached him for contributions, but added that his connection with the magazine was likely to have been “sustained by the different poets who [occupied] the position of Gregory Fellow Jon Silkin, Martin Bell and Peter Redgrove were all known to him. Poems by Brownjohn were again published in the magazine in December 1968 and January 1969, during Bell’s tenure of the Gregory Fellowship in Poetry. He also read at the 1969 Leeds Student Arts Festival alongside Leeds graduates Ken Smith and Tony Harrison.

In November 1958, another poem intended for the 1960 P.E.N. *New Poems* anthology was published in *Poetry and Audience*, although unlike Alan Brownjohn’s submissions, Gene Baro’s ‘The Voice Remembered’ was included. Correspondence in the Silkin Archive at the Leeds University Library shows that Baro and Silkin had known each other from the early 1950s; Silkin had also published several poems by Baro in the penultimate and final issues of *Stand* to be published from London in 1956 and 1957. Baro, an American, was at this time based at the University of Florida, and Silkin appears to have attempted to get his poems published in other literary journals in the United Kingdom: Baro comments in a letter of December 1955 that he would send poems to Silkin for *Stand* and “for some other periodicals, since you are willing to trouble [yourself] on my behalf.”<sup>20</sup> Although no direct evidence exists in the archives at Leeds, it is highly likely that Silkin provided the link between Baro and *Poetry and Audience*. ‘The Voice Remembered’ appeared in the magazine in November 1958, and two further poems in March 1959; all three were subsequently published in Baro’s collection *Northwind and Other Poems* [1959].<sup>21</sup>

Gene Baro, like Jon Silkin, came from a Jewish background, and was not the only Jewish poet to be published in *Poetry and Audience* during Silkin’s time as Gregory Fellow: poems by Arthur Jacobs (A.C. Jacobs) were published in February and November 1959, and poems by Gerda Mayer in January 1960. Jacobs and Silkin first met around 1952 in London at the Ben Uri Art Gallery, at around the same time as he met Philip

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<sup>19</sup> Alan Brownjohn to Kathryn Jenner, 5 November 2007. Leeds Poetry 1950-1980 Project, University of Leeds.

<sup>20</sup> Gene Baro to Jon Silkin, 20 December 1955. Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection MS 20c Silkin/8/BAR-2.

<sup>21</sup> Issued as *Poets of Today*, no. 6, in a volume also including Donald Finkel’s *The Clothing’s New Emperor*, and Walter Stone’s *Poems 1955-1958* (New York: Scribner, [1959]). *Stand* was listed in the acknowledgments of *Northwind*; *Poetry and Audience* was not.

Hobsbaum.<sup>22</sup> Both Silkin and Jacobs were invited to join meetings of The Group in Hobsbaum's flat off the Edgware Road; they later shared a flat in Finchley, in a house own by Bernice Rubens and Rudolf Nassauer. The first poems by Jacobs to appear in *Poetry and Audience* were published in February 1959; his contributor's note states that he had recently given a reading to the University of Leeds English Society. Two further poems by Jacobs were published in November 1959, and may have originally been solicited by Silkin for *Stand* magazine: Silkin wrote to Jacobs in October 1959 asking for poems for *Stand* in anticipation of its relaunch from Leeds in 1960.<sup>23</sup> Seven poems by Jacobs appeared in the magazine's first issue to be published from Leeds, but none of these had appeared previously in *Poetry and Audience*. Silkin's connection with Gerda Mayer is less clear, although she was connected with The Group in the 1960s, and was published by Silkin in *Stand* in the 1970s.<sup>24</sup>

Ewart Milne's relationship with Silkin dates to the early days of *Stand* in London. Correspondence in the *Stand* Archives at Leeds shows that Milne subscribed to and started to submit poems to the magazine in March 1953.<sup>25</sup> He was first published in *Stand* in the same year, and continued to be a regular contributor until his death in 1987. Milne, like Alan Brownjohn and Gene Baro, also submitted poems to Silkin for consideration for the 1960 P.E.N. *New Poems* anthology. Not long after this, Silkin asked Milne if he would consider submitting a selection of the poems for an anthology planned to mark the seventh anniversary of *Poetry and Audience*. Milne, who had his first collection published in the late 1930s and was very much an “established” poet, forwarded eight poems to Silkin for the magazine in July 1959.<sup>26</sup> ‘The Wind and the Prophet,’ was published in October that year, followed by ‘General War’ in January 1960. ‘The Wind and the Prophet’ and ‘The Whitman Grasses’ were subsequently included in the *Poetry and Audience 1953-60* anthology. Milne wrote to Silkin in February 1960, commenting “I liked *Poetry and Audience* a lot. It seemed (and seems) more sincere than some of the university efforts from other quarters, far more so.”<sup>27</sup> He also refers in this letter to his poem ‘The Earth Restored,’ which would be published in *Poetry and Audience* in October 1960.

Iain Crichton Smith's contact with Jon Silkin also goes back to the early days of *Stand*. He was first published in the magazine in spring 1954, and continued to be a regular contributor of poems, short stories and translations. Three poems by Smith were published in *Poetry and Audience* in 1960 and 1961. Silkin's tenure of the Gregory Fellowship in Poetry had come to an end by this time. He was, however, still very much a part

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<sup>22</sup> Jon Silkin, ‘Arthur Jacobs: Poet,’ in A. C. Jacobs, *Collected Poems and Selected Translations*, ed. John Rety and Anthony Rudolf (London: Menard Press/Hearing Eye, 1996).

<sup>23</sup> Jon Silkin to Arthur Jacobs, 16 October 1959. Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection MS 20c Stand/3/JAC-5.

<sup>24</sup> Poems by Mayer are held with Kevin Crossley-Holland's papers relating to The Group, Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection MS 20c Crossley-Holland/7/3/25. A poem by Mayer was published in *Stand*, vol. 18, no. 1 (1976).

<sup>25</sup> Ewart Milne to Jon Silkin, 16 and 24 March 1953. Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection MS 20c Stand/3/MIL-8.

<sup>26</sup> Ewart Milne to Jon Silkin, 21 July 1959. BC MS 20c Stand/3/MIL-8.

<sup>27</sup> Ewart Milne to Jon Silkin, 25 February 1960. BC MS 20c Stand/3/MIL-8.

of the literary scene in Leeds, having enrolled as a mature student to study for a degree in English Literature at the University, as well as publishing *Stand* from his flat on Otley Road. Smith also later translated works by Sorley Maclean and Duncan Ban Macintyre from the Gaelic for the Northern House Pamphlet Poets series, established by Silkin and Andrew Gurr in the early 1960s.

Iain Crichton Smith also knew William Price Turner, who succeeded Silkin to the Gregory Fellowship in Poetry in 1960. He was the founding editor of *The Poet* (Glasgow), which ran from 1952 to 1956, largely coinciding with the lifetime of Silkin's *Stand* in London. Iain Crichton Smith was published in *The Poet*, and his contact with Silkin and publication in the London *Stand* may even have been prompted by Turner: they corresponded during this time, frequently discussing their respective magazines and often suggesting to each other potential contributors, exchanging advertisements and attempting to expand each other's distribution.<sup>28</sup> In either case, it is likely that one of these Gregory Fellows in Poetry suggested that Smith contribute to *Poetry and Audience*.

Silkin's role in the Northern House publishing venture may also have been influential in attracting submissions to *Poetry and Audience*. John Barrell's first and only appearance in the magazine in October 1966 occurred around the same time as his pamphlet collection *Property* was published by Northern House. His contributor's note states that he had previously been published in *Stand*, and also refers to a poetry reading given by Barrell at the University in the previous week.<sup>29</sup> Combined with frequent advertisements in *Poetry and Audience* for *Stand* and pamphlets issued by Northern House, this would suggest that Silkin's association with the magazine was also beneficial as a means of publicising his own publishing interests.

The contact between Edwin Morgan and Gregory Fellows Jon Silkin and William Price Turner in relation to his publication in *Poetry and Audience* bears some similarities to that of Iain Crichton Smith. Morgan had published two pamphlets and several translations by the time his poem 'Sculpture' appeared in the magazine in April 1961. Although Morgan was in correspondence with Silkin in 1960 in relation to his submissions to the relaunched *Stand*, it is possible that it was Turner rather than Silkin who encouraged him to contribute to *Poetry and Audience*. By the time Turner had established *The Poet* in Glasgow in 1952, Morgan, himself born in Glasgow, had been teaching in the English Department at Glasgow University for around five years. He was undoubtedly aware of literary activities in the city, and submitted to and was published in Turner's magazine; he was never published in the London *Stand*.

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<sup>28</sup> William Price Turner, Letters to and From *Stand* (ca. 1952-1975). Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection MS 20c Stand/3/TUR-5.

<sup>29</sup> *Poetry and Audience*, vol. 14, no. 3 (28 October 1966).

Gael Turnbull's contributions to *Poetry and Audience* were most likely to have been prompted or solicited by his friend William Price Turner. Three poems by Turnbull were published in the magazine in 1960, the first year of Turner's Gregory Fellowship. Turnbull had previously been published by Turner, both in *The Poet* and in pamphlet form: Turnbull's *A Libation* was the third pamphlet to be issued in Turner's 'Poet Cameo' series in 1956. Turnbull himself had established his own poetry publishing ventures by this stage too. He founded the Migrant Press in 1957, which published a number of poetry collections over a period of around thirty years, including works by Edwin Morgan and Leeds graduate Tony Harrison. Two years later, in 1959, he co-founded and became co-editor of the influential little magazine *Migrant*. His position as an editor and passion for new poetry, alongside his friendship with Turner and Turner's tenure of the Gregory Fellowship, were no doubt combined factors in his sending his own work to *Poetry and Audience* for consideration.

Other contributors to *The Poet* who most probably contributed to *Poetry and Audience* through William Price Turner include Stewart Conn and American poet James Schevill. Conn, who later became poet laureate of Edinburgh, was relatively unknown at the time he first appeared in the magazine in May 1960. Jon Silkin was Gregory Fellow in Poetry at this time. His biographical note states, "His poems have appeared in *The Poet* and elsewhere."<sup>30</sup> Turner, who would take up tenure of the fellowship later that year, appeared in the same issue, as did his friend Gael Turnbull; the connection between Turner and Silkin as magazine editors has been discussed above (p. 62). Conn was published again in *Poetry and Audience* several times during Turner's Gregory Fellowship in Poetry; his poem 'Slum Clearance,' which appeared in December 1960, begins with a quote from one of Turner's own poems.

James Schevill was very much an "established" poet when he was published in *Poetry and Audience*; his first collection, *Tensions*, was published in the United States in 1947. Two poems by Schevill appeared in *Poetry and Audience* in October 1960, shortly after William Price Turner took up tenure of the Gregory Fellowship in Poetry.<sup>31</sup> Schevill had represented in the final issue of *The Poet*, which, like previous issues of the magazine, was very much transatlantic in its scope. Eight of the sixteen contributors to this issue were American, including E.E. Cummings, Cid Corman and Donald Hall; amongst the other poets represented were Roy Fisher and Jon Silkin. Turner's own contact with Silkin may also have been influential in Schevill submitting poems to Silkin's *Stand* following its relaunch from Leeds. Correspondence in the Stand Archives at Leeds includes letters from Schevill to Silkin accompanying submissions in December 1960 and May 1961.<sup>32</sup> Schevill appears to have been resident in London at this time, having been awarded funding to spend a year

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<sup>30</sup> *Poetry and Audience*, vol. 7, no. 20 (6 May 1960).

<sup>31</sup> *Poetry and Audience*, vol. 8, no. 2 (14 October 1960).

<sup>32</sup> James Schevill to Jon Silkin, 29 December 1960 and 16 May 1961. Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection MS 20c Stand/3/SCH-2.

working in a London theatre, possibly as a resident dramatist. The letter from May 1961 refers to his having met Silkin, and to having been asked by John Wain to participate in a poetry festival at the Mermaid Theatre.

The connections and friendships between the poets who held the Gregory Fellowship at Leeds and others would certainly appear to be an important factor in the publication of “established” or “known” poets in *Poetry and Audience*, and was a phenomenon that continued into the 1960s. During this decade, three poets associated with The Group held the Gregory Fellowship: Peter Redgrove (1962-1965), Martin Bell (1967-1969) and Kevin Crossley-Holland (1969-1971). As Gregory Fellow in Poetry, Redgrove himself was the first Group poet to be published in *Poetry and Audience*. Like his predecessors, he contributed poems to the magazine, as well as taking on the role of Editorial Adviser, the first of which, ‘Virgins,’ was published in October 1962. Poems by Peter Porter were published in *Poetry and Audience* in 1963 and 1964.

Martin Bell, who had been introduced to the London Group by Redgrove, appears to have encouraged several of his friends and contacts from The Group to submit poems to *Poetry and Audience*. Alan Brownjohn, who had previously been published in the magazine during Jon Silkin’s Gregory Fellowship (see above, p. 4), had poems in the December 1968 and January 1969 issue; his biographical note in 1968 described him as “a well-known and accomplished poet.”<sup>33</sup> The first poem to appear in *Poetry and Audience* by Kevin Crossley-Holland appeared in the same issue; he would succeed Bell as Gregory Fellow in the autumn of the following year. Poems by Philip Hobsbaum were published in *Poetry and Audience* in January 1969 and January 1970, during the Fellowships of Bell and Crossley-Holland respectively. Hobsbaum may in turn have been influential in the submission of poems to the magazine by Seamus Heaney. Hobsbaum taught at Queen’s University, Belfast between 1962 and 1966; Heaney became a student at Queen’s in 1966; Hobsbaum established an Irish “Group” which included Heaney, Derek Mahon and others. Heaney’s ‘Good-Night’ and ‘The Crowing Man’ were published in the issue of *Poetry and Audience* that contained Hobsbaum’s ‘A Secret Sharer.’<sup>34</sup> A poem by Edward Lucie-Smith, who took over from Hobsbaum as Chair of the London Group when he went to Sheffield in 1959, appeared in the magazine in December 1968. Both Heaney and Crossley-Holland were relatively unknown at this time, but Brownjohn, Hobsbaum and Lucie-Smith had all published several volumes of their own poetry and were starting to developing significant reputations.

During Kevin Crossley-Holland’s Gregory Fellowship, Peter Porter was published in *Poetry and Audience* once again (January 1971), and by this time had himself taken up a writing fellowship at the University of Hull. Gavin Ewart, also connected with The Group, was first published in *Poetry and Audience* in April 1969, and was

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<sup>33</sup> *Poetry and Audience*, vol. 16, no. 7 (13 December 1968).

<sup>34</sup> *Poetry and Audience*, vol. 16, no. 9 (31 January 1969).

described as being “well-known in other periodicals and magazines.”<sup>35</sup> A second poem by Ewart appeared in the magazine in January 1970, in the same issue as Hobsbaum’s ‘Woman of a Certain Age;’ Hobsbaum’s biographical note states simply that he “needs no introduction.”<sup>36</sup>

Other poets associated with Crossley-Holland who were published in *Poetry and Audience* during his tenure of the Gregory Fellowship include Peter Dale and Norman MacCaig. Dale and Crossley-Holland had been contemporaries at Oxford University, their circle also including William Cookson (co-editor of *Agenda* with Dale) and Ian Hamilton. MacCaig’s connection with Crossley-Holland is less clear, although correspondence held in the Crossley-Holland Archive at Leeds University Library shows that he had, on at least one occasion, sent his poems to MacCaig for comment.<sup>37</sup> It may also have been significant that MacCaig was one of the judges of *Universities Poetry* in the year in which he appeared in *Poetry and Audience*. Nonetheless, it is evident that one of Scotland’s leading poets, who had by this stage published some ten collections of poetry, was happy to contribute to and be published within the pages of a student poetry magazine.

Aside from those poets who appear to have been encouraged to submit to *Poetry and Audience* by Gregory Fellows in Poetry, others external to the University, many with established or growing reputations, were published in the magazine during the period covered by this survey. It would seem that similar channels alerted or attracted them to the magazine’s existence; namely, connections to the School of English at Leeds through staff and students, past and present.

Francis Berry was first published in *Poetry and Audience* in March 1959. His first collection of poetry, *Gospel of Fire*, appeared in 1933, and he had published several further poetry collections and critical works by this time. Having been based in the English Department at the University of Sheffield since 1947, he would undoubtedly have been aware of literary activity at Leeds, including the implementation of the Gregory Fellowships. However, he also had connections with the University through G. Wilson Knight, Reader and then Professor of English Literature at Leeds from 1946 until his retirement in 1962. Knight had been one of Berry’s schoolmasters when he attended Dean Close School in Cheltenham in the late 1920s, and had encouraged his writing; he also wrote the Introduction to *Gospel of Fire*. The friendship between Knight and Berry continued when both left the school in 1931, and is evidenced by an extensive correspondence held in Leeds University Library. Anthony Mortimer, editor of *Poetry and Audience* for the academic year 1958-1959,

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<sup>35</sup> *Poetry and Audience*, vol. 16, no. 16 (25 April 1969).

<sup>36</sup> *Poetry and Audience*, vol. 17, no. 10 (30 January 1970).

<sup>37</sup> Norman MacCaig to Kevin Crossley-Holland, 14 September 1965. Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection MS 20c Crossley-Holland/1/2.

remembers that it was through Knight that Berry came to contribute to the magazine.<sup>38</sup> However, aside from this connection, it is apparent from the correspondence between Berry and Knight that he also knew others at Leeds. Letters dating to February and March 1956 indicate that Berry had come into contact with Geoffrey Hill and Arthur Creedy, both of whom were on the staff of the Department of English Literature, and that he had visited the University.<sup>39</sup> Letters dating to February and April 1959 respectively indicate that Jon Silkin, then Gregory Fellow in Poetry, had been invited to address the Student Arts Society at Sheffield University; and that Berry had been, or intended to be, in touch with A. Norman Jeffares, who held the Chair in English Literature at Leeds.<sup>40</sup> In June 1962, Berry contributed to the magazine once again when a special issue, co-edited by Geoffrey Hill, was produced to mark Knight's retirement.<sup>41</sup> In addition to Berry and Hill, other students, colleagues and friends of Knight contributed to this issue, including former Gregory Fellows James Kirkup and Jon Silkin, and former students James Simmons and Robin Skelton.

James Simmons and Robin Skelton were amongst a number of Leeds graduates who contributed to *Poetry and Audience* beyond their time at Leeds. Skelton graduated some two years before the magazine was founded, but was published regularly in its pages in the 1950s and early 1960s. He had become involved in poetry publishing during his undergraduate days, having edited the *Leeds University Poetry* anthology for 1949, and co-founded the Acadine Poets pamphlet series which published works by Wilfred R. Childe (then Professor of English Literature at Leeds) and James Kirkup (the first Gregory Fellow in Poetry, 1950-1952). In May 1963, an entire issue of *Poetry and Audience* was devoted to poems by Skelton. In his introduction, 'Leeds Revisited,' he stated that he saw *Poetry and Audience* as a "descendant" of the 1949 *Leeds University Poetry* anthology, which itself was most probably "the first attempt by a student of a provincial university to emulate the annual collections of poetry that have been produced at Oxford and Cambridge."<sup>42</sup> The poems featured in this special issue were prompted by an invitation from the editors of *Poetry and Audience* for Skelton to read at Leeds; written especially for the occasion, they refer to his student days.

Skelton's interest in the promotion of poetry and the arts more generally continued to develop when he took up a lecturing post in the Department of English at the University of Manchester in 1951. He co-founded the Peterloo Group of writers and artists with Tony Connor and Michael Seward Snow in 1956, and was instrumental in the foundation of the Manchester Institute of Contemporary Arts. It was through Skelton that Tony Connor, himself unfamiliar with university life having left school aged fourteen, came to contribute to

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<sup>38</sup> Anthony Mortimer, Email interview with Kathryn Jenner, 3-4 December 2007. Leeds Poetry 1950-1980 Project, University of Leeds.

<sup>39</sup> Francis Berry to G. Wilson Knight, 3 February 1956 and 19 March 1956. Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection MS 20c Berry.

<sup>40</sup> Francis Berry to G. Wilson Knight, [undated; February 1959?] and 4 April 1959. Leeds University Library, BC MS 20c Berry.

<sup>41</sup> *Poetry and Audience*, vol. 9, no. 22 (8 June 1962).

<sup>42</sup> Robin Skelton, 'Leeds Revisited,' *Poetry and Audience*, vol. 10, no. 21 (3 May 1963).

*Poetry and Audience*, publishing some 23 poems in the magazine between 1961 and 1963.<sup>43</sup> Connor first met Skelton when he enrolled on a course in modern literature at the University of Manchester’s Extra-Mural Department. Skelton was the course tutor and the first “real” poet that Connor had met, and encouraged him greatly.<sup>44</sup> Having been persuaded by Skelton to send poems to *Poetry and Audience*, Connor soon found himself in correspondence with Ken Smith, a member of the magazine’s editorial board and its Assistant Editor for the academic year 1962-1963. Many of the poems Connor published in *Poetry and Audience* appeared prior to the publication of his first poetry collection, *With Love Somehow* in 1962; the majority were subsequently included in this and his second collection, *Lodgers* (1965). Connor later remembered that he had been “happy to send some of [his] best work [to *Poetry and Audience*], even though the magazine was humble indeed in format.”<sup>45</sup> As a young poet from the north of England, Connor was also attracted to *Poetry and Audience* as an outlet for publication as he thought his work would be better received by a magazine based in the north.

At the time, he felt that the content of many literary journals and supplements, such as *The London Magazine*, *The Listener* and the *Times Literary Supplement*, was very much dominated by poets with Oxford and Cambridge backgrounds, and that his work might be better received by a magazine based in the north of England.<sup>46</sup>

Connections made by Gregory Fellows and others at Oxford and Cambridge had, in fact, contributed in some part towards the expansion of *Poetry and Audience*’s scope beyond the University of Leeds; for example, through John Heath-Stubbs (Oxford), Peter Redgrove (Cambridge and The Group), and Kevin Crossley-Holland (Oxford). Geoffrey Hill, a member of staff in the Department of English Literature at Leeds from 1954 to 1980, was also connected with Oxford University, having been a student there immediately prior to taking up his post at Leeds. Heath-Stubbs had recommended Hill to Bonamy Dobrée when a vacancy arose for an English lecturer at Leeds, as a result of his own Oxford connections.<sup>47</sup> Hill, in turn, may have been influential in attracting submissions to *Poetry and Audience* from poets including Anthony Thwaite. Thwaite and Hill were contemporaries at Oxford, alongside other young poets including Alan Brownjohn, George MacBeth and Edward Lucie-Smith. As a student, Thwaite was very much involved in the Oxford Union Poetry Society; a collection of Thwaite’s papers held in Leeds University Library includes an extensive series of correspondence

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<sup>43</sup> Tony Connor to Kathryn Jenner (email), 2 November 2007. Leeds Poetry 1950-1980 Project, University of Leeds.

<sup>44</sup> See Tony Connor’s memoir of Robin Skelton, ‘A Collaboration in Cottonopolis,’ *Malahat Review*, no. 160 (fall 2007).

<sup>45</sup> Tony Connor to Kathryn Jenner (email), 2 November 2007. Leeds Poetry 1950-1980 Project, University of Leeds.

<sup>46</sup> Tony Connor to Kathryn Jenner (email), 7 November 2007. Leeds Poetry 1950-1980 Project, University of Leeds.

<sup>47</sup> John Heath-Stubbs, *Hindsights*, p. 199.

relating to well-known poets invited to address to the Society.<sup>48</sup> This correspondence includes a number of letters to and from Geoffrey Hill, dating back to their student days and continuing into the late 1970s.

Thwaite later recalled that he was aware of *Poetry and Audience* from its very earliest days, primarily as a result of his connection with Geoffrey Hill, but also due to contact with John Heath-Stubbs, Bonamy Dobrée, Jon Silkin and other poets connected with Leeds University, as well as his family connections with West Yorkshire.<sup>49</sup> Heath-Stubbs was amongst the poets Thwaite had invited to address the Poetry Society at Oxford in 1953, and had sent him a copy of the student journal *Oxford Poetry* including work by Geoffrey Hill; Heath-Stubbs commented on the “kick” and “strength and imagination” in Hill’s poems.<sup>50</sup> Thwaite was first published in *Poetry and Audience* in October 1959, and again in April 1961; his poem ‘Public Bar’ was included in the *Poetry and Audience* 1953-60 anthology. He also came to read at the University of Leeds around this time, meeting student poets Tony Harrison and James Simmons.

The students involved in editing *Poetry and Audience* were generally aware of the reputation it had outside the University, and this was undoubtedly beneficial to their confidence as developing writers. Anthony Mortimer recalls, “The very fact of being associated with *Poetry and Audience* helped with access to other small magazines.”<sup>51</sup> He cites the presence of the Gregory Fellows at the University as being “essential in giving *Poetry and Audience* an outreach that would not normally have been expected of a university magazine.”<sup>52</sup> Tony Harrison and Jon Glover, respectively involved in the magazine in the late 1950s and early 1960s, both later commented on the “alternative education” it gave them as young writers in enabling the discussion, reading and recommendation of poetry with other like-minded students and writers. Glover commented in particular on the element of “unofficial networking,” often enabled by Gregory Fellows in Poetry, which brought students into contact with established academics and writers from many parts of the world and “gave ... a sense that all this ‘mattered.’”<sup>53</sup>

The Gregory Fellow in Poetry changed every two to three years, which inevitably meant that the networks of poets associated with them, and who may have been encouraged to submit to *Poetry and Audience*, was also somewhat fluid and subject to change. To some degree, this may account for the range of external and “established” poets who appeared in the magazine; it was almost certainly a factor in the continuity of this

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<sup>48</sup> Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection MS 20c Thwaite.

<sup>49</sup> Anthony Thwaite to Kathryn Jenner, 28 October 2007. Leeds Poetry 1950-1980 Project, University of Leeds.

<sup>50</sup> John Heath-Stubbs to Anthony Thwaite, 17 December 1953. Leeds University Library, Brotherton Collection MS 20c Thwaite.

<sup>51</sup> Anthony Mortimer, Email interview with Kathryn Jenner, 3-4 December 2007. Leeds Poetry 1950-1980 Project, University of Leeds.

<sup>52</sup> Anthony Mortimer, Email interview, 3-4 December 2007.

<sup>53</sup> Jon Glover to Kathryn Jenner (Email), 25 November 2007. Leeds Poetry 1950-1980 Project, University of Leeds.

phenomenon. Decisions on the content of *Poetry and Audience* were made during weekly meetings of its editorial board. Tony Harrison and Anthony Mortimer both recall these meetings as often being rather heated and lively, but decisions on what should and should not be published in the magazine were generally made on a democratic basis.<sup>54</sup> Mortimer remembers that poems received from “established” poets were often published without much discussion. This is perhaps unsurprising, but should not detract from the fact that decisions concerning the content of *Poetry and Audience* ultimately rested with the students involved in producing it. Wayne Brown (Gregory Fellow in Poetry from 1974 to 1976) remarked in his introduction to the anthology produced to mark the twenty-first anniversary of *Poetry and Audience* that the “fresh zeal” of the student editors was undoubtedly a key factor in its success and longevity.<sup>55</sup> That the editor changed from year to year, and that there were annual changes in the editorial team as a whole, meant that *Poetry and Audience* was able to maintain a fresh outlook over a long period. In many ways, this echoes Tony Connor’s assumption that his poems would be better received in *Poetry and Audience* than more established literary magazines based in and around London. The contribution of successive Gregory Fellows in Poetry, and some members of academic staff, in soliciting and encouraging those from their own networks to contribute to the magazine would perhaps not have worked in the same way without this.

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<sup>54</sup> Tony Harrison, Conversation with Kathryn Jenner, 11 October 2006; Anthony Mortimer, Email interview with Kathryn Jenner, 3-4 December 2007. Leeds Poetry 1950-1980 Project, University of Leeds.

<sup>55</sup> Wayne Brown, ‘Introduction,’ *21 Years of Poetry and Audience*, ed. Tom Wharton and Wayne Brown (Breakish, Isle of Skye: Aquila, 1976).