THE DEVELOPMENT OF MAGAZINE ILLUSTRATION IN REGENCY BRITAIN – THE EXAMPLE OF *ARLISS'S POCKET MAGAZINE* 1818-1833

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Despite its modest appearance and content, *The Pocket Magazine* offers much of interest to the print historian. [Figure 1: Title opening to volume IV of *The Pocket Magazine* (John Arliss 1819. Author's collection.] Indeed, its ordinariness is in many ways exemplary of the ways in which significant developments within print culture take place quietly beyond well-known and frequently cited experimental publications. The *Pocket Magazine* was, by contemporary standards and under a variety of publishers' imprints and different names, long lived (1818-1833), certainly long enough to suggest a shift from Regency assumptions about the nature and readership of periodicals towards something more obviously Victorian. As its title implies, the *Pocket Magazine* was self-consciously proud of its small size which certainly allowed the magazine to be accommodated in a relatively capacious pocket. The miniaturising of the format of many print genres at this time is widely apparent. The shift towards wood engraving as a major form of illustration perhaps suggested that the ideal page should be something close in size to the dimensions of a box wood vignette. Cheapness of production may also have been a factor. More substantially, the changes in scale, again expressed in the title of the *Pocket Magazine*, posit the 'pocket' against the library table underlining the dialogue between the vernacular and the genteel that animates the development of a wide range of Regency print culture. Put another way, the life of the *Pocket Magazine* coincides precisely with the historical moment that saw the genteel monthly or weekly miscellany, primarily illustrated by metal engraving, give way to a new wave of cheap weeklies making much wider use of the wood engraving that sought to combine the informative with the entertaining.[1] The

[1] For discussions of the development of cheap weekly periodicals between 1820 and 1840 see Jon Topham, "The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction' and Cheap Miscellanies in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain" in edited by G.Cantor et.al. *Reading the Magazine of Nature: Science in the Nineteenth Century Periodical* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 37-66; Jon Topham, "Thomas Byerley, John Limbird, and the Production of Cheap Periodicals in Regency Britain" *Book History* 8 (2005): 75-106; Brian Maidment,

Pocket Magazine demonstrates exactly these shifts in emphasis and address, retaining aspects of established magazines like the *Gentleman's Magazine* while at the same time reaching out to a broader and perhaps less sophisticated readership with only limited leisure time. *The Pocket Magazine* sat halfway between genteel monthlies like the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the new informational miscellanies like the *Mirror of Literature* in terms of its content (predominantly fiction). The emphasis on size ('the pocket' rather than 'the library' or the 'drawing room') suggested that its aim was to combine cheapness and handiness.

These shifts in format, readership and taste were underpinned by access to the newly available representational media of wood engraving and lithography. Unusually for such a modest publication, the *Pocket Magazine* used, in its fifteen years of publication, metal engraving, [Figure 1] wood engraving [Figure 2: Title page to volume VII of the *Pocket Magazine* (John Arliss 1821)]. Author's collection] and lithography [Figure 3 Lithographed illustration by Robert Seymour in volume 5 of the Knight and Lacey 'New Series' of the *Pocket Magazine* (1826). Author's collection.] to supply its illustrations, and the most interesting print historical narrative that the magazine has to tell concerns the various ways in which it endeavoured to assimilate new reprographic technology, aesthetic ambition and cheapness into a single format that would attract both established readers of periodicals and a new, less-known class of less affluent but culturally ambitious consumers.

In the course of its quite lengthy history *Arliss's Pocket Magazine of Classic and Polite Literature* was successively issued as a monthly magazine by three publishers. The first series was published by John, and later Henry Arliss, and its run comprised 13 half yearly volumes

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published between 1818 and to 1824, when it was passed on to, or purchased by, Knight and Lacey, and re-launched as a New Series under the full title of *Arliss's Pocket Magazine of Classic and Polite Literature* thus maintaining the magazine's association with its first publisher despite the change of ownership. Five volumes were published by Knight and Lacey between 1824 and 1826, when the title was taken over by James and later Joseph Robins, who published 14 more half yearly volumes between 1827 and 1833 under the title of *The Pocket Magazine – Robins's Series*.[2] As its title suggested, one defining feature of the magazine was its small size,[3] but illustration was also central to its definition of what a well-developed miscellany should be offering its readers especially by bringing art produced by established artists to a broader reading public in however miniaturised a form.[4] It is the aim of this essay to suggest some of the ways in which the small scale shifts in the nature of *The Pocket Magazine's* illustrations are indicative of wider changes in the development of cheap mass circulation magazines in the Regency period and point to the volatile, experimental and fraught nature of publishing and the market place for print in this period. It is also an attempt to think the through the role of illustration in magazines which were 'low' in content costs, but relatively ambitious in terms of production costs.

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All three of *The Pocket Magazine's* publishers were interesting, and their combined business histories form almost a paradigm of the high risk opportunism that characterised the

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[2] Later called 'Robins's New and Improved Series of Arliss's Pocket Magazine'. The Robins series did not use consecutive numbering for the volumes but rather gave the year together with 'volume 1' or 'volume 2'.

[3] There were other similar miscellanies that made a point of their miniature format. See, for example, *The Miniature Magazine or Monthly Epitome* published by John Bysh, which launched its second series in 1820 using an extremely similar pattern of content and illustration to *Arliss's Pocket Magazine*. The same combination of occasional decoratively framed engraved illustrations of literary subjects and clumsy title page wood engraved vignettes was used by both magazines. Arliss also published an even smaller periodical, *The Gem*, which ran for four volumes between 1820 and 1822. *The Gem* was a largely fiction based magazine, drawing its content unashamedly from what its title page calls 'recent works of merit.'

[4] One difficulty of describing the illustration of such journals is that the full page plates are often missing from volumes, presumably cut out for use in albums or scrapbooks.

market place in London in the 1820s and 1830s.. John and later his son Henry Arliss essentially ran a printing business that used its commercial resources to venture on out into publishing when an appropriate opportunity arose. The printer/publisher/entrepreneur combination is of course crucial to the development of early Victorian print, and underpinned publications such as *Punch* and *The Illustrated London News* which were capitalised in this way. Arliss published a number of serial publications that drew on the new opportunities offered by an expanding market place – song-books (*The Melodist: and Mirthful Olio* ran for at least three volumes in the late 1820s, and other serialised Arliss song books include *The Pegasus* (1832)[5]), children's primers and educational textbooks gathered under the general designation of the 'Juvenile Library', and other relatively low risk ventures. According to the obituary notice published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* Arliss was 'celebrated as one of the most elegant printers of his time' and 'possessed a considerable taste in embellishing juvenile works with wood engravings.'[6] The obituary goes on to link Arliss's name with Whittington as having 'largely contributed to the revival of the beautiful in the art of printing', and he worked in collaboration with Whittingham on a number of publications, including a long satirical poem called *Paddy Hew* that featured a hand coloured wood engraved frontispiece. Their major joint project seems to have been the 26 volumes of *The London Theatre*, a collection of play texts collected and edited by Thomas Dibdin that was begun in 1815 thus forming one of several such ventures that were simultaneously competing for customers. In 1822, as well as *The Pocket Magazine*, John Arliss was simultaneously issuing an even smaller sized monthly journal, *The Gem*, which was differentiated by containing only fiction, or, as the sub-title put it: 'Select and Entertaining

[5] Henry Arliss later published *The Funny Library of Wit, Satire and Humour* in 16 parts between July and November 1832 which contains some illustrations by Cruikshank, and provides further evidence of the ways in which magazines at this time re-printed images from previous publications.

[6] This obituary was reprinted in *The Annual Register* for 1826 and by C.H.Timperley in his 1837 *A Dictionary of Printers and Printing* (London 1837), 896. The issue title page for Arliss's *The Gem* in 1820 gives his address as 'John Arliss, Juvenile Library, Newgate Street'. Publishers of childrens' literature were necessarily well acquainted with the demands of illustration.

Tales. Prose and Verse. From recent Works of Merit'[7] - piracies, in short. Each issue was prefaced by a full-page engraving, and the opening page offered two tiny wood engravings enclosed in ruled frames – the first of these, which gave the journal's title, grew more elaborate as the publication continued. More varied and sophisticated use of small scale wood engraving was shown in *Arliss's Literary Collections: Original and Selected,* reprinted in volume form by Houlston & Sons around 1830 from a run of original 12 page issues.[8] This work made a title page claim to be 'illustrated with numerous superb wood engravings by the most eminent artists' and it does show considerable decorative sensibility in assimilating a broad range of variously shaped and framed illustrations into the text. The appeal of bringing 'the most eminent artists' to readers through even small scale and relatively unsophisticated engraved versions of their works was one that was widely acknowledged across the cheap miscellanies produced in the 1820s. As interesting as this scattering of images is, the publication's slide in content from an anthology of literary texts towards a general interest magazine, with topographical descriptions and historical anecdotes taking over from album poetry as its central interest, is clearly visible.

These kinds of publications suggest that, while remaining a relatively small-scale publisher, Arliss was willing to engage in the production of modest texts, and especially illustrated books and magazines, across a wide spectrum of forms and genres. In practice his chosen kinds of ventures – song-books, play texts, serialised miscellanies and children's books – were exactly those unambitious but increasingly popular genres that were underpinning the expansion of the print market at this time and making illustration an essential element in attracting a broader reading public. The cheapness and versatility of the wood engraving

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7 *The Gem* was reprinted as a four volume set in 1822 with each volume comprising six thirty two page part issues from the original publication.

8 *Arliss's Literary Collections* is in undated in all its published forms, although the British Library ascribes the Houlston & Sons volume to c.1830. My feeling is that the original issue is c. 1821/2.

formed an essential element in the production of these print genres, and had clearly begun to outlive its reputation as a largely vernacular reprographic medium associated with 'low' cultural forms such as the song-sheet or broadside. Publications like *The Gem* and *Arliss's Literary Collections* showed the firm's genuine ability to use wood engravings in a highly effective and decorative way, making a virtue of the smallness of scale implied by the use of boxwood blocks, and giving tininess in book production considerable aesthetic power. *Arliss's Pocket Magazine* was to some extent visionary in giving 'pocket sized' literature a shape, form and status of its own. John Arliss died in April 1825, and his son Henry took over and continued the business, though perhaps without his father's ability to foster successful projects.

Knight and Lacey operated at a much higher level of visibility and risk, and their business ambitions eventually led to their downfall. Knight and Lacey's specialism, an important one in the history of print culture at this time, was that of finding a variety of ways of turning small units of information – the 'snippet' or the 'anecdote' – into book length publications that worked through accumulation, miscellaneity and profusion rather than narrative drive or overall cohesiveness. Loosely organised by topic or subject, such books of accumulated information looked to the emergence of niche markets and interest groups which were big enough to return profits on bulky and often quite sustained multi-volume projects. In this mode, Knight and Lacey published a three volume *Dramatic Table Talk* (1825) that assembled together a mass of theatrical anecdotes and gossip. *Celebrated Trials* (6 volumes 1825) and *Anecdotes of the Schools of Painting* (3 volumes 1825) performed similar functions for the law and for fine art. *Public Characters: Biographical and Characteristic Sketches with Portraits, of the Most Distinguished Personages of the Present Age,* with engraved portraits, was published in three volumes in 1828.

Of high significance for the wider history of print culture was the firm's interest in magazines of popular information that brought three factors to bear on the assembling of

nuggets of information – seriality, wood engraved illustration and, in many cases, a narrowly defined niche readership. Three of Knight and Lacey's magazines were of major importance in the democratising of specialist knowledge in the 1820s and 1830s – *The Lancet* (1823 to date), *The Chemist* (1824-1825), and *The Mechanics' Magazine* (1823-1873). *The Mechanics' Magazine* was Knight and Lacey's most significant magazine, and was pioneering in its translation of technical processes into visual information by means of small scale wood engraving aimed at a new artisan readership. *The Pulpit* (1823-1871) was another significant element in the firm's portfolio of journals. The firm also published in the mid-twenties (1826-1827) the *Library for the People*, a pre-*Penny Magazine* weekly serial encyclopaedia aimed at a broad-based artisan readership. In 1827 this magazine morphed into the *Chimney Corner Companion*, a compilation of miscellaneous information published in 24 page monthly parts. Each issue was led by a wood cut or engraved first page, and also contained a range of small scale images dropped into the text. Early numbers had combined wood engraved vignettes with full page copper engravings, but the convenience and cheapness of wood engraving gradually ousted the need for the more expensive metal engraved images. In style the wood engravings comprised highly finished vignettes, detailed framed crudely engraved images, and simple line drawings, thus drawing on the full range of stylistic possibilities offered by the medium. Other of the firm's publications of this kind included a project of William Cobbett's called *The Housekeeper's Magazine* (1825-1826) which was an early version of such successful early Victorian magazines as *The Family Economist*, and the *Adventurer of the Nineteenth Century* (1823-1824), an early journal of travel reportage.

In all these projects, the illustrated magazine can be seen moving away from a general interest publication into much more precisely defined niche interests. The widely diverse magazines published by Knight and Lacey suggest the extent to which the wood engraving

had by this time been assimilated into widespread use for both decorative and explanatory purposes. While these publications of the late 1820s acknowledged that wood engraving had a crucial role in developing not just Knight and Lacey's list but print culture more widely, the firm nonetheless showed considerable willingness to experiment with different kinds of illustration not all aimed at the mass market. Several of their multi-volume collections, like *Public Characters*, used traditional engraved portraits as a form of illustration, and the linear simplicity of these full-length portraits was effective. As a firm widely interested in publishing Byron's works, Knight and Lacey published early biographical studies of the poet, the most significant being William Parry's *Last Days of Lord Byron* (1825), which was illustrated with three coloured aquatints and an engraved frontispiece by the firm's house artist Robert Seymour, suggesting both the firm's willingness to reach out to a genteel market for expensive books when appropriate and their recognition of Seymour's ability in more ambitious artistic genres than wood engraving.

Another sign of Knight and Lacey's interest in the genres, forms and reprographic variety becoming available to the print market in the 1820s. was their exploitation of complex engraved title pages to give weight and dignity to volumes that were subsequently more modestly illustrated elsewhere. The volume re-issue of the first two volumes of the *Mechanics' Magazine* provide two notable examples of elaborately engraved emblematic title pages of this kind, although nothing in this idiom could be more impressive than the title page of Robert Stuart's *A Descriptive History of the Steam Engine* (1823). Such a deep engagement with the wide range of available reprographic media available, and equally intense acknowledgement of the drive towards cheaper illustrations were crucial to Knight and Lacey's stewardship of *The Pocket Magazine* between 1824 and 1826.

While Knight and Lacey's ambitions outran their commercial flair (the firm went temporarily bankrupt in 1826), *The Pocket Magazine's* third publisher, Joseph Robins enjoyed

sustained success as a specialist in publishing illustrated books, particularly humorous works, and especially works by the rising star of book illustration, George Cruikshank. Cruikshank's biographer, Robert Patten describes Joseph Robins's firm as 'solid' and 'diversified', and describes in some detail Cruikshank's happy alliance with Robins on many projects at a key moment in Cruikshank's career.[9] Robins came from a long family line that had been involved with the print trades not just as printers and publishers but also as booksellers, stationers and sellers of paper hangings. His importance in relation to the history of periodicals is two-fold. First, he pioneered the use of coloured illustrations in a number of periodicals, including two – the *Ladies Pocket Magazine* (1824-1836) and the *Gentleman's Pocket Magazine* (1827-1830) – that used 'pocket' in their title. These two magazines drew on Robins's previous experience with another periodical that included Cruikshank colour illustrations, *The Humourist*, which ran in forty 6d. parts between 1819 and 1820.[10] The presence of Cruikshank makes clear Robins's second major contribution to the history of periodical illustration – he was one of the first publishers to take full advantages of an emerging taste in the late 1810s and early 1820s for comic illustration, and his wider publishing activities gave him access not just to Cruikshank's work but also to a mass of humorous illustrations being published in volume form under his name.

Robins launched a more up-market illustrated magazine, the *Dublin and London Magazine*, with some Cruikshank illustrations, in 1825, and it ran until 1827. But he was well aware of the need for diversified and broad-based list of periodical titles if his firm was to take full advantage of the newly available range of readers who might be persuaded to subscribe to attractive and well-illustrated magazines. The genteel end of his market was substantially catered for – in addition to the two magazines already cited, Robins launched the *Young*

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9 Robert L. Patten *George Cruikshank's Life Times and Art* (London and Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2 vols., 1992 and 1996) 1, 269.

10 Patten, *George Cruikshank,* 1, 190-192.

Gentleman's Magazine of Amusement and Information in1826), and published the long running *Ladies Museum* (1798-1832) throughout the 1820s. But Robins had not neglected the market for miscellanies, although his *Repository of Modern Literature*, which ran for two volumes in 1823, had been a more complex and expensive publication than most titles published in this fashionable but largely down-market mode. Robins had illustrated the *Repository* with both elaborate full-page metal engravings and carefully wrought wood engraved vignettes. In volume I the wood engravings are largely of the kinds of topographical subjects widely found in the miscellanies, but volume II launched a long series of Shakespeare illustrations to accompany descriptions of scenes from the plays. The full- page engravings were mostly portraits of eminent individuals in a wide variety of styles, but all with some sense of aesthetic ambition. In many cases these portraits were drawn across from other of Robins's publications, which gave the plates in the Repository a somewhat miscellaneous appearance. The rather weird depiction of the renowned London street sweeper Charles Mackey, with its surreally detailed head imposed on a crudely sketched background (vol. II, 306) was taken from *Wonderful Characters*, a three-volume publication that Robins had published in 1821. It was Robins's ability to draw on the considerable stock of images, and especially comic images, held elsewhere in his publications together with his experience of publishing a wide range of differing types of illustration that made him an obvious person to take over the struggling *Pocket Magazine* from the bankrupt Knight and Lacey.

Robins, despite having the *Pocket Magazine* to manage, extended his interest in publishing a popular informative/entertaining illustrated weekly miscellany throughout the 1820s. In August 1829 he took over the *Portfolio of Amusement and Instruction in History, Science, Literature, the Fine Arts, & c.*, a 3d. weekly magazine published by John Duncombe since 1823 that had reached a 'new series' with its 168th. issue on July 25 1829. A feature of Duncombe's version of *The Portfolio* had been the quality of the illustrations which were set

in a more spacious page with larger type than usual for such a type of publication. The illustrations, used as part of the issue title page, featured tonally quite sophisticated lithographs which, while replicating the formal qualities and Gothic tropes of the wood engraved illustrations for serially published popular fiction at this time, were distinctly more ambitious. This ambitiousness was acknowledged by publishing each illustration within a ruled frame to suggest its pictorial qualities, thus distinguishing these illustrations from the mass of vignette wood engraving that was the usual reprographic form for such miscellanies. The first issue of the magazine published by Robins, no. 177,[11] made immediate changes to *The Portfolio*, replacing Duncombe's ambitious images, which had sought to give weight to the Gothic commonplaces of fictional illustration, with lively, quite large scale but crudely drawn wood engraved vignettes. Some of Robins's title page vignettes drew on comic graphic tropes rather than the more familiar theatrical melodrama and gothic settings more frequently used to illustrate the short fictions published in the miscellanies, thus introducing an obvious modal shift from literary seriousness to a more boisterous humour . Robins continued to tinker with illustrative possibilities through the next few issues of the magazine, dropping small topographical vignettes into the text to preface short descriptive articles, and occasionally offering an issue with a separate full-page engraved plate. The October 17th. 1829 issue, for example, accompanied its lead article on 'Death of the King's Giraffe', with an engraving of 'The King's Cameleopard' that seems to have been imported from another publication. Other issues offered portraits of well-known actors like T.P.Cooke and Charles Keane. But as the magazine endured, Robins's illustrative repertoire began to narrow, and by the summer of 1830 many title pages for issues of *The Portfolio* were displaying 'Topographical Illustrations' and then 'Metropolitan Illustrations' comprising small scale wood engravings rather obviously re-used from the multi-volume surveys of London topography that Robins was publishing

[11] Re-designated by Robins as 'issue 10 of the 'New Series', vol. 1.

elsewhere in volume form. Such a retreat from full page metal engravings to comic vignettes and small scale topographical wood engravings suggests lowered expectations for the graphic content of the magazine. Or it may be that the unambitious wood engraving had become so commonplace by this time in the early 1830s as an illustrative medium that relatively down-market publishers felt little pressure to maintain the aesthetic and technical ambitiousness of the previous decade. Under Robins's guidance not just the *Portfolio* but also the *Pocket Magazine* certainly celebrated the humorous wood engraving in an unapologetic way as appropriate for its readers.

iii.

Superficially all the various series of *The Pocket Magazine* subscribed to the same pattern of illustration. Each issue of the magazine ran a full page (though of course small in size) engraved plate either borrowed from other 'pocket' editions of literary classics or commissioned for use in the magazine.[12] These plates were used to give dramatic graphic shape to extracts from the well-known literary works that formed the central content of the magazine. Other similar engraved plates were used as frontispieces for the volume republication of the magazine. These relatively sophisticated engravings were combined with small scale wood engraved vignettes used to mark the opening page of each issue. The tiny wood engravings varied enormously in manner and level of finish, some having the crudeness of vernacular woodcuts for crude broadside publications while other had the compact microcosmic energy and high finish of the emblem, thus recalling the graphic decoration that accompanied the

[12] I have tried to find precise sources for illustrations in the *Pocket Magazine* among previously issued pocket editions of well-known literary texts published by Cooke and others without much success despite obvious similarities in the size, framing and engraving technique. But there is internal evidence from illustrations in the magazine that they had previously been published elsewhere. In volume II of the original Arliss series, for example, the text on p. 51 prints a verse extract under the heading 'Subject of the plate. From Lord Byron's Poems XX', with Vol. IV. Page 20 as a subscript. Opposite is a framed engraving entitled 'Byron's Poems' with 'Poem 20 Line 9' added. Such allusions to a pre-existing publication are replicated throughout the Arliss volumes suggesting that the engravings were being re-used from previous volumes. They certainly have the form and manner of late eighteenth-century re-issues of literary classics.

publication of many volumes of eighteenth century poetry. Such a combination of metal engraving and wood engraving clearly mediated between the conflicting cultural alignments implicit in the miscellany – genteel against vernacular, the need for cheapness against traditional aesthetic ambitions, and, perhaps, decorative effectiveness against both naturalism and the informational. As already suggested, some of the full-page engravings, often by distinguished painters and illustrators like Richard Westall and Henry Corbould,[13] both prolific draughtsmen widely commissioned to produce illustrations in the early nineteenth century, were probably imported from previously published illustrated editions of British writers such as Byron, Moore and Scott.

The Pocket Magazine, in its successive iterations, was thus deeply entrenched within the experiences of publishers of illustrated serial publications at a moment of both opportunity and difficulty. The opportunities were largely the outcome of a rapidly increasing potential readership for diverting and instructive literature, the recognition of seriality as a valuable mode of publication, and the widespread introduction of reprographic methods, especially the wood engraving and lithography, which could provide, speedily, relatively cheap illustration. The difficulties were perhaps less obvious, but nonetheless powerful formative influences, and the remainder of this essay seeks to elaborate the complex problems that confronted publishers, editors and illustrators at this time, difficulties that were substantially re-enacted on a much bigger scale by the widely known and celebrated journals of the late Regency period such as *The Mirror of Literature*, *The Penny Magazine* and *The Saturday Magazine.*

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[13] Richard Westall (1765-1836) is described by Houfe as 'popular and prolific' and specialised in working 'chiefly for publishers of poetry, decorating their pocket editions with vignettes and 'conversation piece' subjects within decorative borders. His drawing are….firmly in the 18th. century tradition.' Simon Houfe, *The Dictionary of 19th. Century British Book Illustrators and Caricaturists* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, revised ed. 1996) 345. Richard Corbould formed part of an artistic dynasty that included his third son Henry, and had worked on Cooke's miniature editions of classic literature published between 1795 and 1800. See Houfe *Dictionary* 99-100.

iv.

The first difficulty was one of content – the relentless demands of periodicity meant that fresh material needed to be found for each weekly or monthly issue of a magazine. Verbal content could be relatively easily solved through a combination of unashamed piracy from other periodicals with the reprinting of widely available literary texts. Illustrations were more difficult to find on a regular basis. Some use could be made of the stock of decorative blocks that could serve as end-pieces or textual embellishment held by many printers and publishers. Such small wood blocks had proved a valuable means of filling out the spaces left on the page by, for example, the lay-out of poems, and, of course, could be conveniently printed off at the same time as the type-set elements of the page. Engraved plates, that required separate printing from type-set text, and which were therefore usually ascribed to a page of their own, were more demanding both in terms of the time and expense required for their making and in the need to be aligned closely to the texts they were illustrating. A shift from 'decoration' or 'embellishment' to 'illustration' was consequently widely accelerated, if not initiated by, the periodical press in the 1820s and 1830s, especially in accompaniment to extracts from well-known literary texts. Blocks or plates could undoubtedly be commissioned by the editor or proprietor of a journal from artists and engravers, but delays seem to have been frequent and increasingly frustrating for the *Pocket Magazine*.

Until the title went to Robins, with his considerable back catalogue of blocks and access to Cruikshank's output, Arliss and Knight and Lacey had found themselves under constant pressure to sustain the promised level of illustration in the magazine. The central issue concerned the production of the engraved plates – wood engraved blocks were widely available from stock or could be quickly made to fill a particular space, but the production of metal

engraved plates was more difficult. Arliss found this a particularly irritating problem. The Preface to vol. III (1819) offers apologies for 'the plates not having been regularly given in some of the recent numbers'. Further comments refer specifically to the wish to ensure the aesthetic quality of the plates and not allow them to become 'hasty scratches from obscure spoilers of copper'. But the problem did not go away. The Preface to Volume VII (1821) talks of the 'considerate patience' with which readers have 'borne the delay that has taken place in giving the plates' and promises 'the utmost regularity in future'. But, alas, even by volume XI from 1823 'it is once more the painful duty of the Proprietor to apologize for his being still in arrears with the plates'. By this point it would be 'tedious' and 'irksome' to 'enumerate all the causes which have combined to prevent him from performing his promises.' It is an interesting comment on the way magazines at this time, especially miscellanies that reprinted much material from other already published sources, that it was the proprietor and not the editor who was forced to apologise, and it seems to be the case that it was part of the proprietor's or the publisher's agreed role to take responsibility for the illustrations and design of the magazine. The Preface to volume II of Arliss's series of the *Pocket Magazine* (1819) makes such a division of oversight clear: 'The Proprietor has spared neither expence [sic] nor trouble, to procure such embellishments as may prove not unworthy of the approbation of persons of taste; and has paid no trifling, and, it is hoped, no fruitless, attention to typographical accuracy and beauty. The Editor, on his side, has endeavoured to make the literary part of the Magazine a source of amusement and instruction to all its readers'.

It is no wonder that with these difficulties Arliss was keen to sell on his title to Knight and Lacey. Yet Knight and Lacey, despite their considerable resources, fared little better. In an Announcement that prefaced volume V of their 'New Series' (1826) the publishers stated that:

> The Subscribers to Arliss's Pocket Magazine are respectfully informed that the work will in future be published by James Robins and Co. ….. by whom arrangements are made for furnishing an *uninterrupted* series of splendid engravings, with considerable

> novelty in the literary department. Messrs. Knight and Lacey cannot take leave of their numerous subscribers without expressing their regret that the pressure of unavoidable circumstances has compelled them so frequently to omit the engravings, but they feel happy in being able to state that no such disappointment is likely to occur in the future.

It seems that the writer of the Announcement was aware of Robins's large backlist of illustrated publications which gave the firm a substantial resource from which to fill the pages of the *Pocket Magazine*.

One potential solution to the problems of gathering illustrations from over-pressed engravers and previous publications, tried by Knight and Lacey during their relatively brief ownership of the title, had been to employ a 'house artist'. Robert Seymour had been trained as a draughtsman for wood engraving by the firm but had shown talents beyond expectation, and had been used to produce a range of more ambitious illustrations for Knight and Lacey's publications, becoming a friend of Henry Lacey's in the process.[14] For a brief stint, Seymour produced lithographs for the *Pocket Magazine*, in an attempt to boost the status of the magazine's graphic content. [Figure 3] For the first three volumes of Knight and Lacey's Second Series of *The Pocket Magazine* the firm had stayed faithful to the tried and tested illustrative formula established by Arliss, using in particular a sequence of engravings produced by Corbould to illustrate an edition of Scott's poetic works. These were printed opposite extracts from the poems and must have formed a cheap and useful way of establishing an aura of gentility for a magazine essentially comprising serialised short fiction, brief historical and topographical articles and miscellaneous anecdotes and snippets mainly drawn in from other magazines. But in volume IV of Knight and Lacey's 'New Series' (1826) something more interesting happens. The 'Prefatory note' to the volume offers the by this time familiar editorial

[14] For Seymour as a magazine artists see Brian Maidment "The Draughtsman's Contacts – Robert Seymour and Periodical Illustration in 1832" *The Journal of European Periodicals Studies* (on line journal 2016) 37-52.

apologies for the magazine's failure to maintain the advertised run of plates with any consistency.[15] Despite, or perhaps because of, its cheapness, small scale and scrappy content, *Arliss's Pocket Magazine* clearly felt a compulsion to retain its most culturally ambitious element – the full page, highly finished decorative engraving. Its solution was an innovative one. Perhaps already well aware of Seymour's abilities to produce something more sophisticated than an endless stream of small scale descriptive wood engravings, the magazine began to commission the firm's house artist to produce original images to include alongside its literary offerings. Startlingly, given the date, these were produced by means of the unexpected medium of lithographs. While without the ability to reproduce lithographs themselves, Knight and Lacey must have calculated that having their own artist draw direct on to stones which could then be printed on a jobbing basis by the leading firm of Hullmandel was in the long term both cheaper than buying in plates or images already made for other publications and interesting and original enough artistically to attract readers to their publication.[16] It is a mark of the very particular relationship that Seymour had established with his employers that they felt confident enough in his abilities to commission him for this important task.

Robins's solution to the difficulties of supplying illustrations on a regular basis, was perhaps a more realistic one. Much of the illustrated content of the Robins series of the *Pocket Magazine* came from blocks that had already been commissioned or owned by Robins for other publications, and for which he held the copyright. [Figure 4. Double page spread from volume II of the 'Robins Series' of the *Pocket Magazine* (1828) 109. Author's collection]. While this was an economically and logistically obvious way to provide a magazine with a stream of visual

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15 'It has been a subject of much regret to the proprietors of the Pocket Magazine, that circumstances, arising out of the unprecedented distress of the commercial world, have prevented them from strictly fulfilling those engagements into which they originally entered……the Plates not having been regularly given…….One of the wood cuts not being procurable in time for this number, the Publishers have added twelve pages of letter press….'New Series' vol. 4, Preface (1826).

16 Seven of Seymour's lithographs appear in volumes IV and V of the Knight and Lacey 'New Series' interspersed with more conventionally produced metal engravings. The title page of both volumes is also lithographed, although the plate is not signed. Previous volumes had used metal engravings.

content, it also had widespread consequences for the content of the magazine. In Robins's case the obvious illustrations to use were the stock of wood engraved vignettes that had been drawn by the likes of George or Robert Cruikshank for various humorous publications in the late 1820s. In using these illustrations, Robins was inevitably making a major modal change to the content of his magazine, bringing the comic into play against the Romantic intensity of the previous illustrative practices of the magazine. [Figure 5 Double page spread from the 'Robins Series' of the *Pocket Magazine* (vol. 1, May 1827, 216-217). The illustration and text are borrowed from John Wight's *More Mornings at Bow Street* with a wood engraving by George Cruikshank. Robins had recently published Wight's book. Author's collection]. In the re-use of previously published small-scale comic wood engravings Robins was following an important trend. *Bell's Life in London* had initiated this practice with the introduction of its 'Gallery of Comicalities' in 1827,[17] although legal and copyright difficulties had forced the magazine to move towards commissioning illustrations from relatively little- known artists. Over the next few years it became clear to publishers and editors that the blocks that carried comic images, however small and unambitious, were a valuable commercial asset that enabled the republication of images in differing print contexts for widely varied readerships. In short, the comic image became a commodity that could be re-ascribed to a wide variety of print outlets. By 1835, for example, Seymour's illustrations for *Figaro in London* had been re-published within almanacs and as large-scale sheets of images without textual annotation. The legitimation of the wood engraved comic image as something attractive and culturally challenging enough to form a major attraction for a miscellany like the *Pocket Magazine* was an important moment in the development of nineteenth century periodical illustration that looked forward to *Punch* and its many competitors.

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[17] For *Bell's Life in London* see David Kunzle "Between Broadsheet Caricature and *Punch* Cheap Newspaper Cuts for the Lower Classes in the 1830s" *Art Journal* 4, 43 (1983), 339-346; Brian Maidment "The Gallery of Comicalities: Graphic Humour, Wood-Engraving, and the Development of the Comic Magazine, 1820-1841" *Victorian Periodicals Review* 50, 1 (Spring 2017) 214-227.

v.

A second major difficulty confronting the illustration of the *Pocket Magazine* concerned the widely differing cultural status of the different reprographic methods and the graphic styles they permitted or encouraged. None of the three publishers of the *Pocket Magazine* felt able to dispense with full page engravings of literary topics despite their increasing reliance on various wood engraved elements within each issue. Many of these interpellated wood engravings harked back to a vernacular broadside or school book tradition of simplified linear graphic representation despite being situated in the magazine alongside sophisticated full-page metal engravings and more traditional decorative elements. Apparent discrepancies in cultural levels between metal engraved and wood engraved illustrations were exacerbated by the extremely elaborate and emblematically dense frames that were used to contain the single page plates. [Figure 1] Some sense of the anxiety caused by the disparate cultural registers offered by the illustrations can be gauged from the magazine's persistent efforts to pictorialise wood engravings through various framing devices. But there were obvious attempts to give even the simplest wood engraving an increased pictorial presence. Framing was one key chosen device to increase the status of the wood engraving [Figure 2] The simple vignette, a topographical caprice, used here to illustrate the title page for volume VII of the Arliss series is contained within both a single line and a double line that together turn the image into a crude simulacrum of a framed print hanging on a wall. Such framing is widely used in the magazine to offset the linear simplicity of the wood engraved illustrations. The central characteristic of the vignette form – its lack of a clearly defined 'edge' so that the image fades or bleeds into the white page – is thus sacrificed in an attempt to enhance the status of the tonal and compositional simplicities traditionally associated with the wood engraving. It is characteristic of the increasing status of the wood engraving that when Robins introduces the

comic vignette to his series of the *Pocket Magazine* [Figure 5] the humorous energy and high spirits of the image is allowed to formulate itself into an unframed space that relegates the type set textual content of the page to a secondary role, and can even compete for visual attention with a full engraved plate printed on the other side of the double page opening.

vi.

In all three series of the *Pocket Magazine* the illustrations sought to maintain the cultural status of the engraved full-page plate while also exploiting the simplicity, graphic immediacy and decorative potential of the wood engraving. In this, the magazine was using visual elements to underpin its wider cultural claim. The *Pocket Magazine* was trying to present a miscellany of borrowed, pirated and otherwise accumulated content as something more than diversionary entertainment to fill in an evening in a gentleman's drawing room. Despite the aim of the magazine to reach beyond the traditional readership for literary miscellanies through the use of a smaller format and the use of content largely imported at no cost from already printed texts, the full page engraved frontispiece remained a continuing statement of the magazine's claims to gentility and cultural status. Its importance was affirmed by the elaborate framing of the main image within an accumulation of linear and emblematic devices. While the full-page frontispieces served the ostensible purpose of illustrating episodes from texts printed in the magazine, they also displayed a considerable aesthetic autonomy that went beyond the merely decorative. The *Pocket Magazine's* issue frontispieces showed artistic ambition and brought an aura of sophistication to the relatively modest literary and social aspirations of the journal.

The cultural resonances of the cheaper, handier wood engraving were more of an issue. Some wood engravings, in the tradition of eighteenth century books of poetry, were used as page fillers, largely with a decorative function and with the additional aim of asserting a certain

level of cultural sophistication as emblematic devices. Other wood engravings were essentially illustrative, offering visual information in order to expand articles on topography or history. In these instances, very simple images were often subject to modes of framing that sought to replicate more ambitious 'pictures'. Such images predate, but resonate with, the great informational project of the wood engraving to be found a decade later in *The Penny Magazine, The Saturday Magazine* and *Pinnock's Guide to Knowledge.* The comic illustrations drawn across by Robins from his extensive list of publications to fill out *The Pocket Magazine*, however, brought a new level of aesthetic and cultural ambition into the illustration of the magazine. The use of comic modes, derived from caricature but formulated into sophisticated wood engraved vignettes, suggested ways in which even modest literary miscellanies could undertake a major modal shift away from the traditionally genteel. In this way, as well as in its experiments with lithography, the *Pocket Magazine* remains alert to, and to some extent shaped by, the shifting illustrative potentialities becoming available in the 1820s, potentialities that would be widely exploited by the mass circulation illustrated journals of the 1820s and 1830s.