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Derisory royalties for academic authors

Like Professor Emeritus Herrmann (letters, 23 November 2000), I am a contributor to the New Dictionary of National Biography and other Oxford University Press publications. Unlike him I recognise that, as part of Oxford University, the OUP is a charity, and therefore bound by the laws governing the behaviour of charity trustees. These require trustees, when dealing with a charity's property and affairs, to obtain the financial deal most favourable to the charity's interests. Otherwise a breach of trust is committed.

I'm afraid the hard fact is that if, on grounds of OUP prestige and to further our careers, we academic authors are willing to accept derisory fees and royalties from the OUP, then those are the fees and royalties the OUP must insist on.¹

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www.francisbennion.com

¹ *The Times*, 27 November 2000.