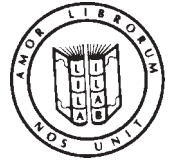


Antiquarian Booksellers Association NEWSLETTER



Summer 2007



Number 341



Josie Gilbert presents Jacqueline Wilson with a bouquet at the Olympia Book Fair.

TRADE NOTES & QUERIES

OLYMPIA

Elsewhere, Adrian Harrington reports on another successful ABA Olympia. See page 4.

It was great to see so many children at a book fair - drawn in by Jacqueline Wilson.

There were some notable sales - including Chris Saunders selling his £125,000 run of Wisdens - and the averages/total sales look good. Michael Silverman - who admits to having had a less than wonderful fair and whose straw-poll indicated the same for other exhibitors - asked in Council: How genuine are the figures? Is there a divide between the top firms and the smaller businesses that make up the bulk of the event? Comments please ...

Ann Morgan Hughes (Black Cat Books) suffered a severe disappointment when what was to have been the sale of the fair evaporated some time later when the 'buyer' returned with husband who vetoed most of the books selected.

Jarndyce sold a £15,000 photograph album as a direct result of Vanessa Clewes-Salmon placing of an article in the *Irish Independent* - the free advertising available to exhibitors really works..

While the PBFA restricts numbers of 'helpers', it's open season at the ABA - Maggs asked for 26 badges for their employees (plus a hand-written one for a late-application consultant) ... and the company doesn't sponsor a single additional nominee ...

Some of the smaller antiques stands at the

Interior Decoration Event next door were looking decidedly out of place. Perhaps the medal man, the water-colour dealers, the portrait miniaturists and other paper-related stands might want to come in with us in the future? And the PBFA will look again at upstairs Olympia for 2009 or 2010.

Oh yes: the Shuttle Bus between the ABA and the PBFA worked wonders - and the ABA contributed to the cost this time.

ABA/PBFA LIAISON

Meetings between the two associations have begun again after a prolonged break, and relations seem to be at their most cordial. Co-operation over June and Edinburgh fairs may be extended to a joint Bath fair. The PBFA's fair this year at Bath, after additional promotion, was back to its glory days with 80 exhibitors. This means that in the future there may be a possibility for up to 30 ABA members taking part in their own section in The Assembly Rooms. A Midlands fair is also being mooted ...

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The ABA Council is asking for the opinion of members on the process for the nomination and election of Officers.

In the past, Presidents and Vice Presidents would somehow 'emerge' to take up their posts - products of discussion in smoke-filled rooms.

Now, President, Vice-President and Treasurer have to be elected by ballot of the members. However, this has not yet happened - because only one person for these posts has been nominated.

The 'Nominating Committee' recommendations to the Council, on who should get what position. As a result it has been rather difficult for anyone not recommended to stand to make it a genuine election.

In 2006, the 'Nominating Committee' consisted only of Paul Minet and Jonathan Potter. Paul Minet resigned and handed his position to another ex-president, Adrian Harrington, without informing the Council, so that the last nominations for officers (Alan Shelley, Ian Smith and Jonathan Potter) in January this year were made by Jonathan Potter and Adrian Harrington.

After disquiet in subsequent Council Meetings, Alan Shelley dissolved the Nominating Committee and set up a 'Study Group'

TRADE NOTES & QUERIES continued...

of Jonathan Potter, Robert Frew, Nigel Williams and Ian Smith to review the procedures.

The Question for members is: Should the ABA be looking for an alternative nominating method - or simply allow any member to stand for officer posts without recommendations from a sub-committee?

BOOKS AT AUCTION

Are auction houses getting slacker? Are there more defectives around in the salerooms? Getting a book with some 8 leaves missing from Bloomsbury was a bit surprising, but, persevering, I left some bids at a recent Bonhams Bath sale. One lot was described as a run of 48 volumes. It was in fact 48 vols in 47 - but the lot arrived with three vols missing.

'You're not the only one' a London insider told me. 'There are a lot of returned books at the moment - I think the cataloguers hope that the mistakes will come out at the viewing.' What is your experience?

BRITISH LIBRARY

The land at St. Pancras intended for completion of the new British Library project is being sold off by the Government. At the same time, the old Round Reading Room is closed for a couple of years - being converted from a library to an exhibition/event space. The desks will be covered by a platform - to avoid the need to apply for listed building consent.

CRICKET CANCELLED

NO PBFA v. ABA match this year sadly. President Shelley says that all possible efforts will be made to set up the game for 2008 - if the teams are not too clapped-out by age and injury by then.

NEW EDITION OF 'A BOOK OF BOOKSELLERS' ...

Sheila Markham, as well as resurrecting her bookseller interviews in *Bookdealer* (most recently John Loska of Colin Page, Brighton), is reprinting her *Book of Booksellers*. I'm reliably informed that Torgim Hannas will not be found in either the book or on-line ...

Contact Sheila: sheilamarkham@hotmail.com

FINE BOOKS AND COLLECTIONS MAGAZINE

(subscribers@finebooksmagazine.com)

I was sent a copy of this American bi-monthly recently. It is similar to Bernie's *Rare Book Review*, very glossy, well produced - but very American.

What's On
**MINET
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Our next date: Sunday 17th June

Is this the future? A letter berates the maga. for not 'reflecting best practice' when illustrating a book being opened: 'Where are the white gloves? Where is the respect that should be shown for a very old book'.

And a firm advertises its services to digitally scan books ('each fragile page is handled with a touch gentler than the human hand' - *should that be white-gloved hand?* Ed.) 'transforming the brick-and-mortar library model to a virtual model ... delivered right to the user's desk top'.

The modern first committee would be interested in another letter from a chap who describes himself as a 'craftsman' dust jacket restorer who does 'everything ... to create a pristine jacket and utilise a range of sophisticated techniques to accomplish that end.'

SPECIALIST WANTS AND FOR SALE ...

The Newsletter is offering a free service to members: Advertise here for specialist WANTS and FOR SALE. The idea is not to replicate *Bookdealer*, but to give you an opportunity to ask the membership for special items, requests from customers outside your own specialist area, books to complete a collection. For Sale items would similarly be items likely to appeal to someone - but you are not sure who. For instance, our first 'For Sale' would have been a box of lantern slides - but they sold before we could tell you ...

ABE STAR RATING

A poll of booksellers at Olympia gave ABE ambassadors Udo Goellman and Victoria

Chater a zero star rating for their efforts. This unfortunate state of affairs came about because of ABE's failure to persuade any bookseller to agree with them. ABE responded that "... Measuring your satisfaction is one of the most important factors in our continued success and growth. Your feedback provides us with an opportunity to see where we are succeeding and where we have room to improve ...".

PBFA - WEBSITE FREE TO MEMBERS, OPEN TO ABA MEMBERS

The PBFA website (books@pbfa.com) has greatly boosted its presence on the internet by offering uploads to PBFA members for FREE, as well as opening up to ABA members. There are now over one million books on the site, and 60 booksellers in the queue to come on board. But still not searched by Bookfinder and Addall ...

ROBERT KIRKMAN'S BIKE RIDE FOR BHF

Robert writes: 'The London to Brighton 54 mile bike ride went very well indeed. I drove down to Brighton on Saturday and stayed overnight. Bikes were loaded on to lorries and we left by coach for London soon after 4am Sunday morning. I joined the start queue on London's Clapham Common at 7.30am and made the finishing line at Marine Parade in Brighton at 1.30pm, taking several short breaks for refreshments along the way. There were two heavy downpours of rain but I was still able to enjoy the magnificent views from Ditchling Beacon in the sunshine'. *Alan Shelley adds:* 'Note Robert's Silver award for British Heart Foundation fund-raising - perhaps the trade was generous?'

TRUCE CALLED IN MEMBERSHIP DEBATE

Over many years the ABA rules have been revised and rewritten - and yet there is a continuing debate centred around the simple question: Is the INDIVIDUAL an ABA member, or is it the COMPANY?

A working party was set up by the President to try and answer this question. It couldn't come up with a definitive answer - in the red corner Laurence Worms argued that it is self evident that the Individual is the member; in the blue corner, Robert Frew argued that it is the Company.

Council initially thought that with such a divide in opinion, the matter should go back to the membership. Laurence offered his resignation, feeling that after putting in so many

hours to revise the rules, he was in the best position to interpret them but his opinion was not being accepted.

The whole matter was put to rest at the July Council meeting, when a vote was taken confirming the basic principle of individual membership, but that membership is registered in the trading name of the business. This was passed unanimously and the vote was followed by another (almost unanimous) requesting Laurence to reconsider his position.

Laurence has now withdrawn his resignation & returns to the Council table. It seems that any further discussion on the nature of membership will be put on the backburner for a while. The truce is agreed; there is no current taste for further battle ...

ADVERTISE!

The Newsletter is an ideal place to advertise; surveys show that 97% of circulated copies are kept on the coffee table, beside the bed or in the bathroom for at least a month, and 72% are filed for future reference.

Or, have your own leaflet or book list inserted with the Newsletter Mailout. See the Rate card on page 6.

INTERNET INITIATIVES

This is advance notice of an exciting announcement to be made in September. The ABA will be offering a web hosting service through Nativespace at very low cost. Broadhursts are acting as the guineapig, Jonathan Kearns (email: jonathan@harringtonbooks.co.uk) is in charge. Meanwhile ... If you don't have a website, Jonathan will set you up with a simple template site for £50. He has begun the revamp of the ABA site - but for it to really work, send in DESCRIPTIONS of items you currently have for sale together with IMAGES for use on the site. Also, let the office know of good LINKS that can help the ABA site grow ... (See Jonathan's article on page 19)

And don't forget the 'EXCLUSIVITY' approach to web selling: upload to trade association sites first, before ABE. Long term the ABA is looking at a possible SWITCHOVER date ...

PSSSSST! HEARD ABOUT PCIDSS?

That's the 'Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard' and if you haven't heard about it yet, you will, if you process credit cards. In short, it's about making sure that everyone is as secure as possible on the web. And, of course, it's going to cost ... John Critchley is investigating - Clive Farahar and Sophie Dupre are the guineapigs.

SNIPPETS....

Famed Spitalfields artists, Gilbert and George, collect 20th Century Boys stories.....The salerooms of Paris are a law unto themselves, so it's only those very much in the know who find out about the Drouet's occasional 'Instant Sales' - no advertisement, no catalogue.....Thomson, Roddick is that nice old-fashioned auction house in Carlisle (typical response to a telephone enquiry for a condition report: 'Oh, you won't want that lot'). Churning through, sale-after-sale, are items from a wonderful collection of mainly Northumberland and Newcastle ephemera c.1780-1850. Apparently some lucky dealer cleared a solicitor's basement & now has 'a warehouseful of stuff'. Thomson, Roddick are turning wastepaper into large quantities of the folding stuff.... Unsworth's have followed Cathatch Books in making a public announcement that they are leaving the ABE site following the 'ludicrous new bookseller rating system'..... Remember Tony Hattersley? The Stockport bookseller who upped sticks to Whitby after a little local disagreement over the legal definition of 'stolen books' died years ago, but everyone wondered what would happen to his remaining stock....it's coming up at Bonhams soon....



NOTICE OF UPCOMING CATALOGUES....

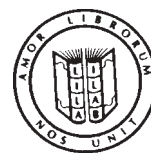
As well as reviewing members' catalogues published, let the Newsletter know IN ADVANCE when you have a catalogue planned.....

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REPORT ON OLYMPIA FAIR 2007

By Adrian Harrington
Olympia Chairman
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Jacqueline Wilson, having graciously accepted my invitation to be this year's patron for Olympia, left us with a bit of a problem. Our ever helpful President had sent me a newspaper cutting about a signing that the author had done in Bournemouth. Some 2000 children had attended and the signing took nearly ten hours! The idea of any sort of a repeat at Olympia was worrying to say the least. In the end it worked perfectly. About fifty perfectly behaved children came and showed their enthusiasm for Britain's most popular children's writer. Yes, I have heard of J.K. Rowling, but Harry Potter's just one title in seven parts not a whole raft of them. It was an absolute delight to see little huddles of wide eyed children and their families discreetly stalking Jacqueline around the Fair. Who knows? This brief exposure to the wonderful world of rare books may mean that we have a few new collectors for the future. The talk in the trade is generally of an aging population of collectors and dealers. It was to try and address this that I was also happy to allow David Brass to bring along some vintage electric guitars to help display his John Lennon inscribed book, *Primal Scream*. I bought along a set of signed Banksy prints. They sold, as a result of the Fair, the day after we closed. Do we need to worry about the future of the rare book trade? Possibly, but if this year's Olympia is anything to go by, the trade is still healthy.

The decision to go from 4 days down to 3 wasn't taken lightly. The thinking was partly driven by a full analysis of last year's figures; we knew a couple of big deals that had been concluded on the Sunday that would have been closed on the Saturday if Sunday wasn't available. Taking these figures out showed the ac-

tual take on the last day was some £60,000, a good sum but not when divided amongst 140 dealers. Closing on a Saturday also allowed our out-of-town and overseas exhibitors to get home in time for the start of the week. However, there were enough exhibitors raising a concern during the Fair for us to decide to run a quick poll. The results were very decisively in favour of the 3 days, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. I think all will agree with me when I say that the move to a 3-day Fair made for a more dynamic one. There appeared to be no quiet patches and there was a constant energy that gave a healthy pace to the event. This 'feel good' factor was reflected in the many emails of congratulation received as well positive comments on the returns sheets. It was particularly gratifying to get positive feedback from our Continental exhibitors.

Analysing the various figures for a Fair run over a different time scale to previous ones is always going to be problematical but I'll give it a go anyway. At £3,128,719 we took £61,000 less than last year; the average take was down by £2219, nearly 10%, and attendance down by 206. So were we down on last year? I don't think so. The average daily take in 2006 was £797,452. In 2007, it was £1,042,906 - an increase of over 30%. The average spend per visitor in 2006 was £970. In 2007, it was £1,015. Bearing in mind that we have been refining our methods of counting people through the door, the true average take is probably much higher. In all this analysis, I have left out the Baumans and Heritage. Every year firms come and go as exhibitors at Olympia. These two giants are different, however. Natalie assures me that they will be back next year, itching to buy books across the board. Heritage is another story, as we all know. Lou wants to spend a lot more time on the golf course and Ben wants to slim down, so no more Heritage at Olympia. They have strongly supported the show from its very beginning and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for that.

Setup and break down all went well. Indeed, Hugh Best from Caladex said that it rivalled New York. Ed, the head porter, did sterling work in organising the dealers' trunks and boxes as did Pom Harrington and Paul Foster in being the bouncers keeping order at the end. Sadly a few dealers didn't understand that a good system was in place and kept blocking the doors to the storage area in an effort to get their trunks. As ever, my committee were a great and imaginative support and I really can't thank them enough. They are all busy dealers with businesses to run and all gave their valuable time freely and positively. Thank you.

As to publicity, Vanessa managed her 'rabbit out of a hat' trick again, although I don't know how. This year was particularly slim with regard to suitable material and the newspapers are becoming more difficult to deal with. I suppose it's as a direct result of our wonderful education system. When the news editor of *The Times* tells you that he has never heard of Burne Jones, William Morris or the Pre Raphaelites you begin to despair. Nevertheless, Vanessa got us excellent coverage in a tough climate. Thanks Vanessa for this and for your help with our advertising campaign. This year we have managed to get a very full breakdown of how well our money was spent and what the affect was on attendance.

Finally, we come to Marianne Harwood and the office. When Philippa left last year for pastures new, I have to say that I was worried. Philippa remains a friend and was going to be a tough act to follow. We worked well together and the Fair had flourished and grown. All I could see ahead of me was a lot of hard work whilst we 'broke in' a new rookie. Well, I needn't have worried. Marianne stepped up to the plate and shone! Her attention to detail meant that I did have to work hard but not as hard as Marianne. In disassembling and then reassembling the way the Fair worked, she put together a template that will make subsequent years so much easier. So Marianne: Thank you, thank you, and thank you. The office, as ever, were quite simply amazing. We are truly blessed to have such skilled and dedicated people and once again I would like to thank them for their calm and solid support. John Critchley, foolhardily, volunteered for the onerous and highly responsible role as head of Health and Safety and managed to keep the beady-eyed fire officer happy. I would also like to thank Sandy Critchley for volunteering to 'man' the mike for the duration of the Fair and to help wherever needed. Ped was wonderful as front of house manager. On re-reading this it reads, in part, like an Oscar ceremony with so many thank yous. Trust me: they are all richly deserved.

CHINA

Successful Olympia? Try Hong Kong - China's first international Book Fair, 30th Nov - 1st Dec. Stands sold out, glass cases available.

Contact ABA Office for further details.

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Photos by Susan Greenhill.

OLYMPIA - THE PUBLICITY BATTLE-FRONT

By Vanessa Clewes Salmon
 ABA Publicity Officer
 vanessa@wildwood13.fsnet.co.uk



Last year for some reason, exhibitors rallied to my call for publicity material but this year my various pleas tended to fall on deaf ears - I don't know why. Nobody seemed to have anything particularly exciting and few were particularly excited! The result was that we had less editorial publicity than last year. However, we did more ticket offers than last year either free with journals, societies, associations or *The Daily Telegraph*, thanks to the Jacqueline Wilson article.

Jacqueline Wilson proved to be a 'find' as our Patron. She was interested, highly professional and very amenable. We could have had much more publicity about her visit to the Fair but we decided that the exhibitors may not have been too happy with literally thousands of children queuing up outside (our responsibility) or milling about inside. We had about 40 JW fans who behaved impeccably, one even breathlessly confessed that it was the best Friday of her life!

On the whole, publicity or free editorial is becoming increasingly difficult because there are fewer arts news stories reported, as daily newspapers are generally becoming less and less highbrow. Another vital point to bear in mind is that we are competing for space with London's major June fairs and sales, as well as what's going on in the world generally. Understandably if something important crops up, the arts stories go out of the window.

However, on the whole, if we do have serious, weighty items the press fall over themselves to publish, for example last year the Columbus and Einstein items guaranteed us plenty of editorial in the dailies and these stories were then syndicated world wide. Light, frothy items preferably with a 'celebrity' angle will also attract attention and I managed to squeeze in an amusing little piece in *The Times* People column, the Fair was mentioned but Dylans Bookstore wasn't. Items in between are very difficult to place in daily newspapers but I can always find a home for them in the specialist previews if I am sent the material in time preferably by the end of March.

This year I had some surprising encounters with the press. David Brass had a wonderful collection of witty illustrated letters from the Pre Raphaelite Sir Edward Burne-Jones, but the news desks of a couple of our major daily newspapers had never heard of him and had only grudgingly heard of the Pre Raphaelites. Need I say more? In fairness to them, it was not exactly hard news although a marvellous subject. Another casualty was Jonkers, who had some charming unseen, fresh to the market, illustrated letters from Beatrix Potter. These were due to go into the *Daily Mail* as a major arts feature but it was pulled at the last moment. These things happen, but it was nonetheless infuriating and I was very sorry for Jonkers who had given the journalist so much time. I did reoffer the story elsewhere and I was asked, 'What do these letters tell us about Beatrix Potter that we didn't know before?' Amongst the suc-

cess stories was Jarndyce, who had an album of photographs of Constance Gore-Booth, one of 'Ireland's wildest women' as the headline put it. I gave this to *The Irish Independent* where it received almost a page and Jarndyce was inundated with offers. Nigel Williams had a very interesting letter from PG Wodehouse about his ill-advised Berlin broadcasts during WW II. I would have thought that the *Daily Telegraph* would have loved this but 2 journalists there turned it down. I eventually gave it to *The Observer* as the Literary Editor had written a biography on Wodehouse. Apparently this article was then picked up by the *Independent* and the *Guardian*. Of course it sold as a result. Once again, generally, if you give me the material I can usually place it.

Country Life did us proud with a colour illustrated double page spread; the *Wall Street Journal* covered us extensively and *Satellite News* came to film at the Fair. Our tireless photographer managed to place a photograph of Jacqueline Wilson, her publisher and David Brass in *The Bookseller*, we have never been there before! Once again specialist journals previewed us eg *Book and Magazine Collector*, *ATG*, *Rare Book Review*, *Bookdealer*, *Antiques* and of course, the *TLS*.

Next year please try and send me information by Easter about what you might be bringing and I will place it in specialist journals. Other more substantial items I will need from the end of April to 10 days before the Fair opens.

ABA NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING RATES				
	Members		Non-Members	
	Single	Annual	Single	Annual
Small (8.2 x 5.7cm)	£20	£110	£40	£220
Single column (25 x 5.7cm)	£40	£220	£80	£440
Half page (12.5 x 18cm)	£50	£270	£100	£540
Full page (25 x 18cm)	£70	£380	£140	£760

Annual = 6 issues for the price of seven.

Artwork should be submitted in the following formats: Word (Times New Roman typeface ideally), pdf (to the correct size), jpg, PageMaker, or send an email with your text and the office will typeset a basic layout for you. Please send photos and illustrations in jpg format if possible, or we can scan the hard copy if necessary.



Steve Weissman: a peaceful moment on the Ximenes stand.



*Left: Charles Cox
Above: Roger Treglown
Photos - Carol Murphy*

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A NOTE ON THE INTERNET - Where the Trade went wrong

By Peter Allen of Robert Temple Books, newly elected member of the ABA

There used to be an adage in the mail-order bookselling trade: "If you catalogue a good book and don't sell it, it's under-priced." We tested this on several occasions over the years, and it was true: doubling the price tended to sell it; trebling the price to produce multiple orders for it. And the same people were getting the catalogues each time. It is possible, of course, that people were holding off in the hope that the price would fall, and panicked when it rather steeply rose - but the fact that more orders would arrive if the book were re-catalogued at £90.00 than £60.00 inclines me to another explanation: at £30.00 they thought there must be something wrong with the book, but at £90.00 it was obviously a nice copy! "You can't help some people!" as my mother would have said. The only people who buy underpriced books by mail-order are other dealers.

Many years ago a young lady bookseller wrote an article in ABMR in which she said that when she first went into bookselling she had thought that she'd be finding £500 books for pennies every week. This of course had never actually happened, but she made a good living and very much enjoyed running her shop. The article caused stifled giggles among some sections of the trade, for her shop was well known as a place where you COULD regularly find £500 books for pennies. There was general gladness that she made a good living and enjoyed running the shop. Another bookseller of a different sort, also at about that time, put forth the complaint in the introduction to one of his catalogues: "One of the hardest things in this business is to come to terms with the fact that how much you can get for a book depends not upon what you have, but who you are." His better books went mostly, I suppose, like the young lady's, to other members of the trade.

There used to be two sorts of professional bookseller. Ignoring private library purchases and the like, the one bought chiefly at auction, and (occasionally) from other booksellers or accredited runners. The other bought chiefly from 'lesser' booksellers whose shops they visited, or runners. The 'lesser' booksellers themselves bought from even lesser ones, and so it went on down to the level of the street-market, the better stock finding its way upwards by degrees until it was filtered out by some sharp-eyed private purchaser or reached its highest price. The 'lesser' booksellers under-priced books either from ignorance or because they simply did not have the reputation, and therefore the market. Trading was, in either case, between levels of knowledge, those at the top end being paid for knowing and guaranteeing what they had, and their ability to produce a title, often, on demand;

and also on their knowing who might want it. They had also, of course, a reputation for these things. Their customers were mainly relatively wealthy people who did not have the time to hunt for books themselves; or institutions, where the same frequently applied and who also might want a particular edition in a hurry for some special need. The average collector, who did not buy at the top end, collected for the fun of the chase, and also from the feeling that whilst he was enjoying himself he too might find a bargain, which he could gloat over if it were some rarity in his own field, but if it were something that he did not want, sell on - and his hobby thus become something financially rewarding. Many such collectors eventually became booksellers themselves. This structure of the trade had grown organically over many years. All the parts fitted together seamlessly, and it worked and was self-sustaining in the way that organic systems are.

When the web came along, runners did not buy from the web. All the 'lesser' booksellers that those higher in the pecking-order used to buy from put their stock on the web. They still did not have the knowledge, or the market (that being a question of reputation, etc.), and they put their books on at the same prices they would have charged in their shop (or on their street barrow). Two things now happened: a lot of books that previously might have been thought rare turned out to be available in dozens of copies world-wide (often the result of local abundances); and a lot of books that might have been thought rare turned out to be available in six or seven copies. When a book was unlocatable except by chance, it's rarity was emphasised. Six or seven copies world-wide is not a large number, but the fact that you can see that six or seven copies are available world-wide, where previously you might have had difficulty locating one, suggests an unsuspected availability that makes the book FEEL quite common. Collectors no longer had the fun of the chase, and their 'finds' appeared to be suddenly at a discount.

We ourselves have been on the web since 1997, and we have developed the habit when we find a book that looks buyable in any catalogue of checking prices and availability on the web before we purchase. Often we have not bought the book from the catalogue, but have bought another copy from the web. Sometimes we have bought more than one. To give an instance: a catalogue listed for something like £50.00 an American first edition of an early M.P. Shiel novel that we had never had (the real first being English). We looked it up on the web, and found seven copies of the American first and none of the English one. Three of the seven copies were priced between \$250.00 and \$400.00. The other four were priced between \$10.00 and \$30.00. One of the four was obvi-

ously in poor condition. The others were described as nice. We bought three copies for a total of \$67.00, and put one on the web at \$210.00. And then another one. Within two months we had sold out. All the books were ordered on the web, by American booksellers who had web-sites and presumably might have seen them priced at \$30.00 down. They had not bought them because they were dealers who usually bought at auction, from reputable booksellers, accredited runners, etc. The condition of our 'copy' was guaranteed by our name, and it was now in any case the cheapest collectable copy on offer. No more cheap copies appeared during that time. This is precisely what we would have done - and indeed what would have happened - if we had come across multiple copies of a scarce book before the web existed: we once purchased for instance thirty-seven copies of William Plomers 'Address given at the funeral of Ian Fleming', nine of them being the hard-cover edition - and very rapidly sold them all.

The point of all this is that the trade, apart from a few exceptions like ourselves, did not react to the web as though it were an opportunity to purchase, whilst collectors were confused by the sudden appearance of abundance. The sheer quantity of titles is too much for any one bookseller to absorb - but then it always was. And there were not MORE books available when the web first started to operate than there would otherwise have been: they were just more findable and visible - and the opportunity for cornering the market in any one title was correspondingly much greater. The fact that the trade has not done this has left a seven to ten year backlog of unsold books - that are visible books - and this tends to destroy the market by destroying the confidence of collectors and booksellers alike: for nobody but a dealer (or somebody, perhaps, who wants a reading copy) is likely to buy an underpriced book by mail-order, and nobody buys the books whose price correctly reflects their condition and scarcity when there are so many underpriced copies visible at the same time. In the past, a customer would have grabbed a book with eagerness, on sight, in case he never saw another copy of it. Now he feels - he has been made to feel: "There is at least no need to buy the book TO-DAY!" What is more, this spreads to titles that are genuinely rare: confidence in books as objects has been eroded. And this is the fault of the trade, because NOTHING HAS CHANGED! Books are not coming on to the market in greater quantities than they used to do. They are just more visible, and under-priced books are seldom being sold!

The inertia of the professional trade in all this (at all levels) is depressing and can only be deplored. If books are to survive as collectable, iconic, objects it cannot go on. Get out there! Buy! Stock up! Your lethargy affects us all!

REPORT OF THE ABA COUNCIL MEETING, 23rd MAY 2007



Alan Shelley presented outgoing president, Robert Frew, with a plaque to commemorate his two years in office and in thanks for his work for the Association.

Clarification by the President: Alan Shelley reported that there were no minutes from F&GP (Finance and General Purposes Committee) meetings as they take place immediately prior to Council Meetings, but the committee did work from the Council agenda, annotated by the Secretary. This annotated agenda is not available to Council Members.

Brian Lake commented that there should be as much openness as possible, that there should not be papers which are not available to Council Members and that F&GP discussions should be fully reported.

F&GP: Modest surplus for the year. Peter Miller and Elizabeth Strong to meet with HSBC to discuss performance of Benevolent Fund Investments.

Secretary: John Critchley reported on the ABA contract with the RLG (Research Libraries Group) database for ESTC, Union Catalogue, OCLC.

Contract to be maintained for a few months to see if it is worth continuing now that ESTC is available free via the British Library site. Invaluable is to offer a price for a group deal on its auction records site.

The Centenary Book: ABA copies almost all sold.

Nature of Membership Working Group: This group had been set up by the president to answer the long-running question: 'Does membership of the ABA reside in the individual OR in the company?' However, far from coming to a firm conclusion, a vote on the proposal that the rules of the ABA be changed to clarify the situation resulted in 4 votes for, 6 against and 6 abstentions.

[Subsequent discussion has been overtaken by events: Council Meeting of July 11th voted in

favour of a motion confirming that membership is vested in the individual, but registered in the name of the company (where this is applicable).]

Olympia: Adrian Harrington reported that the Olympia Fair was heading for a healthy surplus of about £10,000.

Education: Laurence Worms reported that there was a good response for the London Rare Book School and De Montfort University was moving towards the establishment of a rare book course.

Export: Julian Rota took part in a meeting of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art See page 16 for full report.

Handbook: The new edition of the ABA Handbook will be published in 2008 and edited by Michael Silverman.

Internet: Michael Graves-Johnston reported on the Internet Sub-Committee: suggestions to improve the ILAB site had not been taken up. There is now a Wikipedia entry for the ABA. PCIDSS - see article on page 3.

Stock exclusivity - everyone selling on-line is being encouraged to offer stock exclusively via trade association sites such as ILAB before downloading on to ABE.

Publicity: Press Officer Angus O'Neill's proposals for a 'Summer Exhibition' of books offered for sale by ABA members was backed by Council.

Standards: Christopher Edwards reported on cases of slow payment: All members should be reminded that unless payment is made according to the Code of Good Practice (ie within 30 days) the ABA itself would be brought into disrepute.

Jolyon Hudson reported on proposals for dealing with ex-library books; debate is ongoing.

ILAB: The Japanese ABA is holding an International Book Fair in Tokyo in March 2008.

AOB: Brian Lake asked that Resolutions

for consideration by AGMs should be printed in full in the agenda papers in future; Roger Treglown announced an exhibition at the Chelsea Book Fair by Keith Fletcher of his collection of motor car books and memorabilia; Julian Rota questioned the idea of 'Switch over' from ABE and the requirement for immediate payment for books purchased at ABA bookfairs.

(This is a precis of the Minutes taken by the ABA Secretary; full minutes are available at the ABA office. At time of writing, the Council Meeting of July 11th has taken place, but Minutes not yet published.)

ABA Greenhouse Branch Committee Meeting

Jolyon Hudson, of Pickering & Chatto, wearing his gardening hat, provides a very special take on selected items on display at the May ABA Council Flower Show.

The ABA Greenhouse was replanted a few months ago and we can report that this year our hardy perennials, annuals and other potted plants are once again in full bloom. Sadly we have been unable to the secure historic structure from almost constant break-ins and yet again we have report that vandals continue to throw stones. One hundred & One years of constant uphill battle against rot, blight and disease has not diminished the enthusiasm of the Greenhouse Branch Committee to bring forth a bountiful crop. As a departure from our usual reports we thought it a duty to our members to let them know what takes place at our sister organisation the ABA, and to this end we append an indication of what we thought were the most interesting discussions that took place in May ...

Councillors were very alarmed when President Alan said he was full of 'hope' for a cricket ground on which to play the annual battle between the ABA and PBFA; there was fear that he might choose a field too near our historic greenhouse. (For those who are both ABA and PBFA members it is a question of how to make sure of playing for the winning team and not be seen as too sly about it.) Anyhow, President Alan looked forward to the 'full wave of excitement' that the contest would engender in the membership. As it turned out, the excitement was just too much for all parties and the contest was abandoned before a ball was bowled ...

In response to reports of low income from investments by the Benevolent Fund, Elizabeth Strong & Peter Miller are to make a first assault on HSBC to make them see the error of their ways, encourage them to cut their profits, increase our interest payments and help the decrepit booksellers. This David against Goliath team (or is that Abishag with David against Goliath? - see 1 Kings 1:1-4) have the full backing of the Council-Committee. In addition, the ever-resourceful president has devised a cunning Plan B should they find opposition.

FROM A NOT-SO-ELDER STATESMAN

Less diplomatic, but sure to be effective, Plan B will involve the Treasurer Potter 'sending the Boys round'. ('Boys' we assume equates to other rough map dealing types.)

Out of Print and into Profit has been voted (I ask by whom?) as No. 2 bedside book in Rare Book Review. Much back and thigh slapping round the committee table, except for one sulky member whose own masterpiece was slued into third place. What beats me is how anyone could climb into bed with the winning entry: 'The Bedford Book of Hours. But clearly size and weigh alone prevailed in choosing a winner. Those interested in the true winner and lightest entry, Fish who answer the Phone and other Bizarre Books by Russell Ash and another distinguished compiler, should contact the our beloved editor, who is happy to arrange very generous discounts and unlimited signed copies, with or without dust-jackets.

Apparently The London Rare Book School is all but booked out with the exception of the History of Writing Course. Clearly together with other professional bodies Doctors, Lawyers et al writing has become completely superfluous. Young budding booky people have seen through this educational ruse, they know they could never get anywhere in the 'Profession' as writers and will be considered mere 'Trade' if they should be ever tempted to follow such a course.

Unfortunately space precludes any reports on sex; substance abuse; menaces; collusion; sheer bloody mindedness; auctions, auctioneers; specific auctioneers; ex-auctioneers; auction premiums, and auction commissions. For further information on these subjects, Members are advised to consult the F & GP.

'Percy Thrower'
Secretary to the ABA Greenhouse Branch Committee



Mr W. H. Lawson and the author of this article, John Lawson.

Dear Brian

First of all my congratulations on becoming News Letter Editor & on your election to Council. You seduce me for an article on my 'involvement with the ABA, why, when and how' implying that I am an 'elder statesman'. With this I take issue, for e'en though I am 75, I don't feel any different inwardly from when I was 45!

To set the scene: my father, W.H. (Peter) Lawson, started this business in 1921 when only seventeen. He became a member of the ABA in 1927, just 80 years ago, (although he did not receive his certificate until 1929 when Craddock was President - were there backlogs or were certificates only just introduced?). The business went into hibernation for most of the war, until I, also at seventeen, entered the bookselling world for a year, before two years National Service in the R.A.F.

In 1952, I started in earnest, and toddled along happily ploughing my own furrow, which included some of the early ABA Book Fairs at the National Book League where, if one was a bookseller out-with London, one was allowed to exhibit one's stock for two long weeks! Things would have continued on this same pleasant path, until the telephone rang one day early in 1971, and a voice said "this is Tom Crowe". Wondering what this man of high office could possibly want with me, he cut straight to the point and suggested I stood for Council - "the Committee" as it was then. Naturally I demurred, but Tom, playing his trump card, said "I don't think it quite fair to continue to exhibit at ABA Fairs and not put something back in" - now telling me I should stand. Feebly I agreed, knowing at the back of my mind that I was not that well known and would not stand a chance of being elected. I

reckoned without Tom! He must have canvassed all round the trade, for when the voting was announced I found myself elected with more votes than other more famous names.

I relate this tale to show how things were run in the days after the war. There was certainly an "old-boys' network" where many things were decided in smoke-filled rooms (a bit like a certain political party at that time) - though I don't remember a plume of white smoke when a new President was decided upon - just a thick tobacco haze! Even in 1979, gentleman bookseller and great diplomat Stanley Crowe, retiring President of the International League, asked me, on behalf of the League Committee, to stand as Vice-President to Bob de Graaf. I agreed, not knowing that our own ABA Committee had another candidate. Democratically I suggested a vote between us, but the other party withdrew, for which I was most grateful. This sounds like another case of "old-boys' network", but the League Committee often asked National Associations for a certain person, for they, few in number as they are, have to work in harmony but at the same time have representatives from different areas. (My Presidency was dogged by a volatile member from a certain country - but that's another story.)

'The Ring' was a contentious issue and had been for many years - several of the leading dealers partaking - some did not of course, and the main voice against in the early days was Sir Basil Blackwell. I remember Frank Maggs telling me of a big country house sale he attended, where, in the hotel after the sale he entered a room by mistake and found most of his colleagues seated around a long table with their sale catalogues. He said "I thought it some Masonic rite and beat a hasty retreat".

Africa Oceania America Ancient Art

Books and Photographs

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It has gone on strongly for many years since, despite members supposedly agreeing to not participate. It was just brushed under the carpet. I may be naïve, but I get the impression it is now not so rife, so maybe that is something the ABA has achieved.

This was partly due to the formation around 1970 of a 'ginger group' to try to turn away from the old regime and take the ABA forward. To a great extent it succeeded - no mean feat in those days I can assure you - and the ABA became more democratic. When Ian Grant was President he twisted my arm to be Book Fair Chairman for two years instead of the customary one, the thought being continuity would be better served, and this was extended in 1975 to the Presidency. As I was Vice-President at the time they sounded me out, I had grave reservations in that a precedent would be set which might make things difficult if a future President was found to be unsuitable. I was persuaded by the wording that it had to be voted upon, and in 1976 I became the first President to serve two years since Winnie Myers in 1950.

Other 'ginger groups' have come along - I have the feeling there is one in the making in the current Council, and that can only be a good thing. What really concerns me are standards of expertise. As books come in here they are collated, even if they have a Quaritch or Maggs collation mark - not that I do not believe them of course, but I can satisfy myself that what I pass on is correct to my knowledge. I know that standards can slip a little as 'rare books become rarer'. For instance, in the old days one might not even catalogue a book if it lacked the half title, longitudinal label, errata or advertisement leaf, but now there are collectors who will never own certain

books if they wait for a perfect copy - so 'sadly lacking half title' etc. appears more often - but at least it is mentioned.

Only the other day a member told me that he had returned two books bought at two different fairs from the same ABA member - an ex-member of Council no less. This is just not good enough. If they had been sold to a private buyer who had then found the faults, the reputation of the ABA itself would suffer. We all make mistakes but "two sounds like carelessness".

I don't know if it still exists, but there used to be a vetting committee touring booths before ABA Book Fairs, checking that all was well. Some time ago I remember finding a New Zealand book I wanted at an Oxford PBFA Fair. The owner had written in '£50 - Lawson's price £65'. I said to him "do you know why Lawsons were asking £65?" "No." "Because their copy had the aquatint frontispiece." "How did you know that?" "I happen to be Lawson"! But he should have known if he had checked his references - and there is always the internet these days. One of the questions asked in application for ABA membership is about the applicant's reference sections or access to reference books. "Members are responsible for accurate bibliographical descriptions". If you price a book you are under an obligation - no 'caveat emptor' or the Association is besmirched. To me, above all else, the ABA must stand for honesty and scrupulously fair descriptions.

You ask for my views on the internet. Brian, I am so old-fashioned that I am afraid it is a closed book to me. I toddle along with my occasional catalogues, receiving the occasional order - but that is one of the great joys - for many of my customers are now also friends, so we have a chat about books, family and life - can one do that on the internet? I don't know and after 55 years of catalogues I'm not sure I want to find out! However, I am sure there is room for the traditional as well as the 21st century. And so long as high standards are maintained - why not? May the ABA go onward and upward, all flags flying!

John Lawson

PAST PRESIDENTS' 25TH ANNIVERSARY LUNCH

On June 11th, nine Past Presidents gathered with spouses and two widows of Past Presidents (seventeen in total) at Kingsholm, East Hagbourne for their yearly lunch. The co-hosts were Anthony Rota (sadly not well enough to be present) and John Lawson.

This was the third time the event had been held at Kingsholm - twice John, and early on

Winnie Myers had elected to hold her lunch there - and of course there was the occasion of the International League gathering at Kingsholm for lunch in September 1984 when John was League President.

John reminded us that back in 1983 Ian Grant and he were spending a weekend walking in the Pentland Hills, when Ian suggested a very select luncheon club of Past Presidents. Between them the idea gelled and the first lunch was held in October 1983 at Fyfield Manor with Sir Basil Blackwell (then the eldest surviving Past President) as host. A splendid lunch was prepared by the Trinity Colege Chef Didier (menu below) all for £9!

Ed Maggs reported at a Christmas party in 2001 that whilst John Lawson was making a speech and looking around at all the younger booksellers, he had settled the collective noun for a gathering of Past Presidents as "A Sleep of Past Presidents". But in 2007, looking round at the now younger Past Presidents, he has had to revise his ideas, and stepping out into the next twenty-five years he proposed a toast to "A Perpetuity of Past Presidents"!

THE BURSAR
TRINITY COLLEGE
OXFORD

19th September 1983

Dear Mr. Lawson,

This is to confirm the arrangements you have made with Chef Didier for a luncheon for 24 people on Monday, 24th October at Fyfield Manor.

We will provide the following menu:

Chicken chaud froid
Sal mon Steak
Ham Cornet
Assorted cold salads

Fruit salad
Profiterole
Gateau

Coffee

Sherry will be served before the meal and wine will be provided. The cost, inclusive of wine, will be £9.00 per person.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Scott.



CATALOGUE REVIEWS

REVIEW I

Dr Mervyn Jannetta, Honorary Member of the ABA and ex-British Library, joins the Newsletter Catalogue Review team, concentrating on Antiquarian.

Email: mervynjannetta@hotmail.com

This being my first offering for a review of catalogues of mostly English printed books from the early modern period, it's as well to start with a fairly modest haul - modest in number, that is, before anyone takes umbrage. As a match for declared special interests **Quaritch** 1352 English Books is just about spot on - a good collection of some eighty-odd items, ranging widely in date and subject, described for the most part with telling economy (the Macclesfield copy of Garzoni's *History of Fools*, 1600, warrants three full pages, but like most of the rest has to do without illustration). There is scarcely a hint of any discomfiture felt in cataloguing Donne's 1633 *Poems* in practically the same breath as Perks's 'Valentine writer' (ca.1810) - a rare complete example of the kind of thing which marks the beginning of 'two centuries of tacky cards'.

Maggs 1409 Continental Books hardly matches the brief, but there are some good books described with easy authority, and presented with satisfying variations in typography and layout. For openers there's a clutch of eight incunabula, amongst them the Crevenna-Wodhull copy of *Turrecremata* on the Psalter (Mainz, 1476) in a Derome binding. These are followed by just over one hundred items, many containing fine early woodcuts or engravings, a number in blind-stamped pigskin. Striking is the rare early-sixteenth-century *Book of Hours* printed by Hardouin on vellum, illuminated and otherwise got up by the printer to ape its manuscript ancestors. The same firm's catalogue 1407 *European Bulletin* has bits from the real thing, reflecting the continuing circulation of fragments excised long ago from early MSS. Items 27-32 form a particularly attractive group of mid-fifteenth-century miniatures attributed to the Fastolf Master, and for good measure the list ends with a couple of highly skilled forgeries.

Christopher Edwards, List 36 *Recent Acquisitions*, offers a carefully chosen selection, many if not most of which have the added value of interesting connections of one sort or another. They include a predictably imperfect but otherwise apparently unrecorded sixteenth-century printing of the *Sarum Hours*; and item 89 - an Oxford copy of an Oxford book - is a copy on large paper of Plot's *Natural History of Oxfordshire*, 1677, presented by Bodley's librarian to an Oxford benefactor. Amongst these higher spots is a scattering of

more modest items, at least a couple of which are noted as not in the British Library.

Other catalogues received include no. 48 in **Alex Fotheringham's** slim-line *Occasional Lists*, in which illustration is understandably restricted to a couple of headline items on front and back covers - that on the front for an ingenious perpetual calendar, one of the customary sprinkling of items through the list with a local (north-east England) connection. **Unsworth** Catalogue 18 presents a good group of some one hundred and fifty items - mostly classical writings in early continental editions, but not uniformly so (item 91, Todd's *Milton* in 13 volumes, is one notable exception). Maggs are not alone in showing how forgery still commands a price: **Spike Hughes** (catalogue 180) confirms as much in a very different sphere, with a copy of Charles Julius Bertram's clever antiquarian spoof of 1757, based on a supposedly fourteenth-century manuscript. Then widely accepted as an important source for the geography of Roman Britain, Bertram's 'edition' was not exposed as a fake for over a century.

Bernard Shapero 50 *Fine Travels Books* stands out for sumptuous presentation. Mostly succinct descriptions face full-page illustrations for each item - worth more than a thousand words (just as well, given the occasional proof-reading lapse, he carped uncharitably). Descriptions naturally include format, but not always physical dimensions, an inconsistency perhaps less helpful when octavos can be made to look disconcertingly like folios (item 23), and vice versa (item 16) - at least on the outsides. Collations are hazarded only twice, but in their different ways, both seem to have taxed the production team beyond their resources. **Henry Sotheran's** *Travel and Exploration* offers a complementary list. Here, six times the number of (mostly post-1800) items squeeze into fewer pages, while managing nevertheless to leave room for an enticing array of pin-sharp illustrations - testament to the now widespread improvement in catalogue production values and standards.

Finally, belated welcome to two relative newcomers - **Justin Croft** number 4, provides stylish presentation of some two hundred items - illustrations to which show imaginative use of cropping, with oddly yellow-greenish hue, set in train with the cover reproduction and typography. Content is wide-ranging, with a few exceptional items (the Lady Mary Worth's *Urania*, 1621, p.o.a.) alongside a job lot of disbound plays from the recently dispersed Allardyce Nicoll collection of dramatic literature.

And to end with a beginning no longer quite fresh, mention should be made of *Catalogue One*, 100 books, from **Ian Marr**. Confessedly seventeen years in the making (if a promise in print is meant to be binding), this is an auspicious debut with a motley mix of association copies, original artwork (for a calendar commissioned by a now defunct National Bus Company), a Hollis binding, and eight fine bindings from that portion of George III's library which was not bequeathed to the nation with the rest of the King's Library.

REVIEW II

Julian Nangle tackles *Modern Firsts*
julian@nanglerarebooks.co.uk

In the scheme of things a review of book catalogues is really rather unimportant: the most disregarded of columns by those for whom they just don't 'do' it and the most narcissistically irresistible for those to whom they might refer.

This said there has been a rich clutch of well produced catalogues of modern books recently, perhaps to coincide with the recent flurry of book fairs. First in line is Catalogue 51 from **Peter Harrington** (100 Fulham Road, Chelsea, London SW3 6HS: 020 7591 0220) which offers part of a stunning collection of books from the library of Emery Reves, Winston Churchill's literary agent who joined Churchill in 1937 effectively facilitating the publication across Europe of Churchill's anti-Nazi views. There are 22 items from this source, every one but one inscribed by Churchill. Should you be interested or wealthy enough to purchase the lot it would set you back £234,250.00. The only problem with this Hoover approach, however, is that you would end up with many copies of *The Second World War*, in various languages: English (£37,500), Hebrew (£5000), Spanish (£15,000), Japanese (£37,500), Dutch (£6750), Danish (£8500) ... are you asleep yet ... ?

Staying with themed catalogues, **Maggs Bros** Catalogue 1399 (50 Berkeley Square, London W1J 5BA: 020 7499 2007) is full of *Modern Irish First Editions* - a theme which cannot really fail given the fulsome support Irish booksellers and collectors give to their own literary greats. Seamus Heaney is represented here with 108 items and J.B. and W.B. Yeats with 49 (9 and 40 respectively). There are also 39 Cuala Press items, my favourite being item 54 the 1916 Memorial printed by Cuala on a single sheet, written by W.B. Yeats and with hand coloured decoration by J.B. Yeats. It is signed

LETTERS

Dear Brian

I enjoyed Jen Lindsay's article 'Tomorrow's Past' in the ABA Newsletter (Spring 2007) and applaud the sentiments expressed. However, I would like to correct the statement that "original condition and rarity are the basic tenets of the trade; but as far as the binding of a book is concerned, 'original condition' is only its most recent binding, which is not necessarily its original binding". This is wrong. I believe that the definition given in my 'Terms of the Trade', published by the ABA, is widely shared. The definition is as follows:

ORIGINAL CONDITION - An unrestored copy, as issued by the publisher or in a contemporary binding.

Yours sincerely,

Roger Gaskell

www.RogerGaskell.com

Dear Editor,

I would like to call your attention to the newly updated library search feature on *viaLibri*, which I think many of you may find useful. It makes it possible to search 10 different online union catalogues and a dozen rare book and special collection libraries all from a single form. Author, title and keyword only need to be entered once. After that, a single mouse click will execute the search on any of the available sites. Results are displayed directly on the target site itself and can be refined, if necessary, using whatever tools are available there.

If you spend as much time as I do clicking your way through multiple library catalogues this should save you a lot of time and aggravation. The union catalogues you can search include: COPAC, KVK, ICCU, CCPB, ESTC, ISTC, STCN, VD17, *artlibraries.net* and the public access version of *WorldCat*. Individual libraries include: Huntington, Folger, American Antiquarian Society, Morgan, Getty, Canadian Centre for Architecture, Art Institute of Chicago, Kew, Harvard, Yale, the Library of Congress and the British Library.

I'm also eager to receive suggestions. If there are library catalogues that you regularly use and would like to see added to this list, please let me know. I will try to add them if at all possible. I am particularly interested in any searchable catalogues that include bibliographic information that is not easily accessible through any of the union catalogues we are already searching. Any other comments or suggestions will also be greatly appreciated.

Thanks, Jim Hinck

books@gardenhistory.com Direct link:
http://www.vialibri.net/library_search.php

Dear Marianne,

Thank you for putting the note about the death of my sister in the last newsletter, but I'm afraid there were some errors. It should have read, Angela Colmer, Sister of Nigel Traylen (Ventnor Rare Books) ... She worked for her father, Charles Traylen in Guildford in the 50s, 60s and 70s.

Regards, Nigel.

by W.B. and seems something of a snip at £750.

There is a charming catalogue with a Vanessa Bell look-alike cover from a surprising source: **Bernard J. Shapero** (32 Saint George Street, London W1S 2EA: 020 7493 0876). Entitled 'Fiftybooks (mostly) modern literature', Shapero's catalogue immediately demands attention with a cover totally reminiscent of a dust jacket on one of Virginia Woolf's early novels. Inappropriately enough, the Woolfs offered here are all lacking their jackets although, and one really must not scoff as I have just done, they are fabulous association copies inscribed to Lady Ottoline Morrell: To the Lighthouse (£28,500) and Jacob's Room (£27,500). Shapero also offers a fine collection of Thomas Hardy first editions, handsomely bound in brown morocco with their original cloth covers bound in. I was surprised to see them offered separately as they made such a handsome run. Prices for these were very reasonable: Under the Greenwood Tree priced £2000, The Mayor of Casterbridge at £1650 and The Trumpet Major at £1000. The sexiest book in the catalogue, without doubt, is Nabokov's own copy of the Olympia Press edition of *Lolita* (£11,000).

Finally, any review of modern literature catalogues at this particular time cannot ignore a truly magnificent offering from **Collinge & Clark** (13 Leigh Street, London WC1H 9EW: 020 7387 7105). It is not just that the books in their catalogues are always mouth-watering, it is that their condition is always immaculate and their presentation superb. Catalogue 30 is no exception boasting full page colour reproductions of work by Barnett Freedman, Edward Bawden, Peter Allen and

Edy Legrande among others. Generous offerings of the work of Eric Gill, St Dominic's Press, Golden Cockerel Press and other early 20thC printers and artists vie for one's attention with more up to date and current Private Presses such as Incline, Brewhouse and Fleece Press. One delightful surprise is a small collection of Spike Milligan broadsheets issued by Toni Savage in Leicester between 1986 and 1994. Individually offered they are priced between £65 and £140. The thing I like about these, particularly, is that while they are limited to no more than 300 copies each they are not signed by Milligan but instead have his signature as a watermark in the paper. At a time, in the '80s and '90s, when authors could not be kept from signing their books by the dozen, I find this curiously refreshing.

REVIEW III

Michael Holman

(Send emails care of the ABA)

We start with a Catalogue One, from **Ian Marr Rare Books**, who has come up with One Hundred Books, association copies, signed presentation copies, limited editions etc. and although there are, inevitably, some very minor items, on the whole it is an interesting and unusual first catalogue and I wish Ian well.

Heraldry Today offer their Summer 2007 catalogue, full of their specialities; I sometimes think they have a built-in market down to people's age old vanity of tracing their families. Nothing wrong in that. I can trace back five hundred years without a break!

A rather unusual catalogue comes from **Michael Graves-Johnston**, devoted to Ethiopia and the surrounding countries. One doubts whether this has been done before.

John Bonham has, in catalogue 36, a fine selection of Polar books, very well illustrated and plenty of scarce items. **Beaumont Travel Books** have cast their net wide as usual in their own speciality and **Grove Rare Books** at Bolton Abbey have a catalogue devoted to Yorkshire books.

Messrs **Sotheran** have two well produced catalogues, their Spring Miscellany covering literature, travel, and sport amongst many subjects, and an interesting Children's and Illustrated catalogue.

Fishburn Books have published 'The Jewish Experience', and last but not least **Shapero's** 'Pilots of the Caribbean', although perhaps oddly named, is a very fine catalogue of atlases, maps and charts of North America and the Caribbean.

Send catalogues for review to ABA Office, Sackville House, 40 Piccadilly, W1J 0DR.



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STUDIES

MA in History of the Book

This interdisciplinary MA, open to both full- and part-time students, is an unparalleled opportunity to study the History of the Book and its influence on cultural and intellectual change. Seminars, run by experts from the University, the Centre for Manuscript and Print Studies (at the IES), the British Library, V&A, and other institutions, consider books (all forms of publicly distributed text) both as material objects and in their interaction with society. The course emphasises the book's creation, publication, manufacture, distribution, reception, and survival. Students with a good honours degree in a relevant subject are eligible for enrolment.

Bursaries available. Contact: IES, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU;

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(quote Ref: HOBABA05)

OTHER LIVES

First in an occasional series of articles by booksellers who have a passion for books - and other things as well... We look forward to receiving contributions for future issues of the Newsletter.

Tony Fothergill, partner in Ken Spelman of York, is also an impresario...

From the Beatles to the Beep Seals - a life outside books.

It's 7.30pm on a cold, and rather bleak February evening in 2007. Fine rain is mizzling down from cloud shrouded hills, not heavy, but enough to start to dampen the spirits of a rapidly growing, and increasingly restless straggle of people outside a small tin hut high up in the North Yorkshire moors. "We've travelled two hundred miles to get here... so where is he?" - a thought that had crossed my mind every few minutes over the last few hours, but voiced by a heavy set man, with more than a hint of menace, it suddenly hit home - this could be a total disaster. Here? - well this is The Band Room, which for over 10 years has gained the reputation as the "U.K.'s smallest major venue", and which for my sins I help to run with a few friends. He? - Willy Mason, rapidly getting a name as the most exciting American singer songwriter of his generation, touted as the new Bob Dylan, and now easily selling-out thousand seater shows throughout the country.

Through good luck, a light touch, and persistence I'd managed to convince him to play a secret show at our venue, his only gig in a whirlwind publicity trip to the U.K. - but that would count for nothing if he did not turn up - and within the next 30 minutes! The rain was easing off, and the crowd were now packing the hall, which was well over capacity as news of the gig had quickly spread through the country by word of mouth - enough for a decent lynch mob I thought.

In a digital age The Band Room is refreshingly analogue - mobile phones get no signal, sat-nav sends you chasing your tail down the other side of the valley, and taking a wrong turning can lead you into



The Band Room, Farndale, Yorkshire.

serious problems - think 'American Werewolf' countryside - at times like this all you have is blind faith, and the reassurance that all the artist has to be able to do is stay sober, keep in tune, and read a map, and in this case remember to drive on the left hand side of the road.

And then, out of nowhere he was there, in a tiny hire car with a mountain bike perched on the back, the broadest grin imaginable, and ten minutes later was playing for two spellbinding hours to a captivated audience. On his way out, the same burly chap nodded his approval - they're people of few words up here, but it said it all. Last week I saw Willy again twice, he asked to stop over mid tour for another secret show and this time turned up with a huge tour bus, and played to 50 locals. The next night he moved to the big stage, 2,000 students were word perfect on his songs, and the press was filled with double-page spreads about him - but we got him before all that, and then I know why it's all worth it.

Music has been a constant thread, at times holding together, and at others unravelling my life; and it all started with a girlfriend, a tall leggy blond - well it was the early 70's! For a young band she was a great asset, but not half as much as her father, the legendary Beatle's producer George Martin. For a brief few years we practised in the studio rooms at his home, on the Beatles' guitars, on 'that' keyboard which opened Strawberry Fields, but then

university came about and we all went our separate ways. I've never thought "what if"; bookselling became a full-time occupation from 1979, then four kids, and before very long you realise you're completely unqualified for anything else outside the trade, but music has obviously always been looking for another way to manifest itself.

So now, the house is filling up with old guitars again, the collecting instinct redirected, and requests arrive every week from artists wanting gigs - so many that as well as the main venue, I now run acoustic concerts from home with my partner Nicki, with artists from the States, Europe and Australia booked in so far this year. There's undoubtedly a buzz in discovering a new talent, or getting a major artist to play for virtually nothing at the 'tin hut'. The same excitement as finding a rare book, yes, probably. Now if I could combine the two that would be something - I seem to remember the last time I saw that same blonde - yes we're still in touch - she had original Beatle's lyrics framed up around the house - now where's her number? And the next gig? - five young guys from Manchester - the Beep Seals - keep an eye on them.

For details of the main gigs visit: www.thebandroom.co.uk - the house concerts are on: www.myspace.com/tonyatthebandroom 10% discount to the trade of course.

LOST BOOKS?

We have had a box of 'lost' books in the office for over 8 years (they were here when I arrived). I think they were left at book fairs and never claimed. This is a last chance for members to stake their claim - otherwise they will be sold - via the Newsletter and sealed bids or by auction - for the benefit of the Benevolent Fund. John Critchley.

- Voyage in het Jaar 1619 by William Methold. Pieter Vander 1707
- Palaestina ex Monumentis Veteribus Illustrata Tomus II. Ex libris Guilielmi Broedelet 1714
- A Literary Diary: or, Complete Common-place Book. Taylor & Hessey 1816
- New and Complete Hieroglyphical Bible. Baldwin, Craddock & Joy 1820
- Professor Wilson's Manual of History. Whittaker & Co. 1835
- The Vision of Dante (trans. Rev. H F Carey). Frederick Wanre 1844
- Four letters from Oliver Cromwell to Sir Arthur Heselridge. Blackwell 1847. Bookplate of J C Crawford and 1951 letter to him from A G Hayslerigg
- Map of Regent's Park and Primrose Hill Estate. Crown 1850
- Herne's Oak by W Perry. L Booth 1867. Bound in oak with slip case
- Curiosities of Judaism by Philip Abraham. Pub. By the author 1879
- 1891(?) copy of 15th C Coptic Liturgy with Paris Library stamp
- Kleinias: poems by Digby Haworth-Booth. At the sign of the boars' head 1932
- Thomas Rowlandson by Art Young. Willey Book Co. 1938
- The English People by George Orwell. Collins 1947
- Harry Price (Ghost Hunter) by Paul Tabori. Attnaeum Press 1950
- The Evans Country by Kingsley Amis. Fantasy Press 1962

All enquiries to the ABA Office, see below!

THE ABA OFFICE

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The Newsletter

Items for the newsletter are always welcome. Please send articles, book reviews, letters, notices, comments, caption competition suggestions and entries etc., to the Editor, Brian Lake, books@jarndyce.co.uk, by email if possible, or the office.

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BENEVOLENT FUND

The Antiquarian Booksellers' Association Benevolent Fund has the following objects:

To relieve cases of need, hardship, financial distress, sickness and infirmity for persons who are or have been Antiquarian Booksellers and the widows and other dependants of such persons.

To promote education and research in the field of Antiquarian Bookselling by providing grants to students undertaking courses in Antiquarian Bookselling and to educational institutions conducting such courses.

The Benevolent fund is administered and managed by three Trustees – Peter Miller (Ken Spelman Booksellers), Elizabeth Strong (McNaughtan's Bookshop) and Jonathan Potter (Jonathan Potter Ltd.).

Please note that beneficiaries do not have to be or to have been members of the ABA. Members are requested to contact any of the Trustees or the Secretary if they know of any person or institution who might benefit from the fund.

DIGITAL IMAGES WORKING GROUP

Report on the Digital Images Working Group on May 9th 2007 and on the Meeting of the Working Party on Manuscripts, Documents and Archives, 23rd May 2007, both at the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

Newly appointed to the Export of Books and Manuscripts Sub-committee, I was struck by the extent to which ABA membership is taken by the expert adviser as an indicator of a responsible and honest exporter. This is a great tribute to the years of work put in by my father and John Wilson. The latter continues to represent us with great diligence, resolution and razor sharp debating skills.

We achieved a very great deal at the first meeting, managing, in essence, to reduce a highly complex and technical three-page draft of proposed regulations relating to the submission of digital images (as opposed to photocopies which are still entirely acceptable) to one straightforward paragraph with a relatively easy to understand one-page appendix, at the same time very significantly limiting and stripping down what would otherwise have been a very onerous set of requirements. Crucially we insisted on the inclusion of digital cameras as well as scanners as a means of capturing digital copies of material as an alternative to the paper copies currently required to accompany export licence applications. At the time of writing, the wording is not absolutely finalised but rest assured that the following, for example, have been whittled down: 'Filenames and structures must follow the ISO-9660 CD file system standard and its level-2 option ... The British Library should be supplied with a set of coherent descriptive records in XML in conformance with a recognised descriptive metadata standard ... MODS, B-LAP (a Dublin Core-based application profile) and MARCXML'.

It was something of a triumph to have gained acceptance of the idea of submitting digital images in the first place. We are especially pleased that the requirements for the images now are, in summary as follows:

- i) they should be at a minimum 300 pixels per inch (for scanners), at 6 (preferably 8) megapixels (for cameras), in colour or greyscale (i.e. not black-and-white), in uncompressed .tiff format and accompanied by a colour management profile (available from photographic suppliers or possibly already embedded by the software used);

- ii) the files/images must each be uniquely and relevantly named (e.g. austenletter001.tiff, austenletter002.tiff) and submitted on a clearly labelled DVD or CD in a clearly labelled case;
- iii) a description (to the standard of a sale description) should be included on the disk and a statement signed to the effect that all the above standards had been met.

A full and final version of the requirements will be circulated in due course. If members have any questions or difficulties with them, I will be more than happy to try to assist.

We are grateful to Aly Conteh of the British Library, who prepared the original proposal, for his flexibility and willingness to listen. There was a pleasing sense of co-operation towards a common goal at the meeting, whether discussing metadata or metaphysics.

The meeting of the Working Party was largely similarly pleasing. John and I were joined by David Park of Bonhams in representing the trade. John and my father have been pressing for some considerable time to have the Open Individual Export Licence threshold raised from £1,000 to £1,500. The former figure was set so long ago that this isn't really an increase in real terms, nevertheless we had quite a battle on our hands with fairly fierce opposition from the British Library. The increase was eventually agreed with the proviso that the MLA would be more stringent about the quarterly returns already required but not very strictly enforced, including nil returns, and that dormant or defunct companies would be removed from the list of OIEL holders. The purpose of this is as a safeguard and to enable monitoring of the effect of the change which we hope will lead to speedier and larger increases in the future. The new threshold will come into effect early in 2008 when the OIELs are issued (it is a three-year cycle).

Another matter perhaps of particular interest to members was the fact that the MLA/PRISM Fund was not used at all last year for acquisitions (there were only a couple of grants for conservation), probably because it is so little-known. It might be useful for booksellers to mention it to appropriate potential purchasing libraries. The fund is specifically for archives and related material of scientific interest.

Finally, there was much hand-wringing and consternation about the creaming off of monies from the Heritage Lottery Fund in order to pay for the Olympics. This seems to me a

very serious situation indeed for us and one that is already affecting our sales. The Working Party, chiefly comprising representatives of the MLA and Department for Culture, Media and Sport (as well as National Archives, the Association of Chief Archivists and the Institute of Historical Research), does not seem well-placed or much inclined to do a great deal about what will in my estimation turn into a crisis, rather hoping instead that one or two high-profile rejections by the HLF will generate publicity and therefore political pressure.

I hope I will be forgiven for using this space to raise a slightly different topic, allowing that this is already probably rather a minority interest report. There seems to be a good deal of burying of heads in sand amongst booksellers and librarians alike when it comes to thinking about wholly or partly digital archives and the future. There are obvious difficulties when it comes to digital archives: value, uniqueness and storage to name but three, and libraries express great concern about conservation cost (it seems that computer department staff are a great deal more expensive than cataloguers and traditional conservators), whilst a visit to the PARADIGM section of the Bodleian Library website is alarming. Librarians at the moment seem to want to pay little or nothing for digital material, instead proposing, for example, continual keystroke monitoring (can anyone imagine an author who would welcome that?), cheap 'ownership' of authors initiated when they are relatively young and little-known, and other intrusive measures. There is self-interest at work here of course, but also a certain sense of duty in terms of protecting those people who create the archives in the first place.

If anyone would like to contact me about this with a view to informally discussing possible ways forward, I would be very pleased to hear from you. I do feel that there needs to be some sort of united front on our part before we are completely outmanoeuvred and presented with a fait accompli.

Julian Rota
bertramrota@compuserve.com

THE ABA & PBFA

Retiring Chairman of the PBFA - and ABA member - George Newlands of Maclaren Books looks back - and forward - to the relationship between the two trade associations.

A preliminary brief history of the Provincial Booksellers' Fairs Association may prove useful. In the early 1970's, a small group of 'provincial' booksellers, realising that if the London trade and book buyers would not come to the far-flung provinces, the provincials would have to bring their wares to them. On a monthly basis these trail-blazing booksellers would set up shop in the heart of London with a welcome supply of fresh, quality stock. Business was good, the fairs flourished, and in October 1974 the association was formally convened.

The early years of the PBFA were solely concerned with the organising and promotion of book fairs, initially in London, but soon extending to other cities and towns around the country. York, Liverpool and other metropolises were perhaps obvious candidates for fairs, but stranger locations like Loughborough also hosted successful events, not perhaps because they were centres of book-buying activity, but because there was a local member of the association prepared to put in the time and effort to organise a fair. This co-operative ethos under lay the growing success of the PBFA bookfair, and to this day the same self-help principle holds well, with all the provincial PBFA fairs being organised by unpaid members for the benefit of other members. In 1977 the first fairs were held in Scotland, so in a very few years, the PBFA had established itself as a truly national bookselling force.

It has to be said that this rapid expansion and the very obvious presence of a 'new kid on the block' did not meet with universal approval amongst the antiquarian and secondhand bookselling establishment of the day, but, of course, that was a long time ago ...

As the PBFA grew and the logistics of organisation became more of a challenge, a full-time administrator was appointed in the mid-1980's, and over the following two decades the association has developed from a purely fairs promoting organisation, although still with the book fair as its core activity, to very much a trade association, providing support, services, and where necessary, discipline for its many members.

My two years as PBFA Chairman have witnessed interesting times, both within the PBFA

and in the wider context of our bookselling world. In the immediate years preceding my chairmanship the membership of the PBFA peaked at around 700 members and the fairs calendar comfortably exceeded one hundred fairs in the year. As I demit office, the membership has dropped to around 600 (still, I believe, the largest such association in the world), and we have lost some twenty or so fairs; not on the face of it a very good track record. However, there are valid reasons for these changes. For a number of reasons, the annual subscription was substantially raised two years ago, which not surprisingly led some of our 'peripheral' members to re-consider their subscription expense. On the fairs front, we have developed a more robust approach to the financial viability of our fairs, and fairs that are not supported and cannot run without incurring a loss, are being axed. The result will be in my opinion, a leaner, more effective, and dare I say, more professional association in the future; but one that will still welcome the recently established bookseller who wishes to develop their business under the PBFA umbrella.

In relation to membership, an encouraging trend is the steady trickle of new applications, both from within the UK and from overseas, including well-established and highly respected booksellers. The PBFA is very much a broad church association, encompassing members from the highest echelons of the trade to part-timers exhibiting at local fairs. As such it differs from the ABA, to which only 'professional antiquarian booksellers' may be admitted. But large or small - in business rather than physique - our members, as those of the ABA, are bound by the association's code of conduct.

Although we may have dropped fairs from our calendar, the PBFA still promotes a wide range of fairs from local 'village hall' gatherings to major national spectacles - 200+ exhibitors at York racecourse is not exactly a low-key event (even if it could not compete in numbers with the ocean of motor-caravans that shared the site in 2006). This year we have re-introduced the concept of the 'premier' two-day fair, with the recent Bath fair in particular benefiting from the extra publicity and sheer hard-work of the organising team. Of course, the main purpose of the book fair is to provide a forum for buying and selling, but a hidden advantage is the opportunity for members to meet on a reasonably regular basis, which can break the monotony of a potentially rather lonely business.

Other PBFA changes in the past two years have seen the departure of our long-serving administrator Gina Dolan, and the settling in

of her successor, Becky Wears, and our successful move from the long-established, but increasingly impractical and outrageously expensive Hotel Russell venue for our monthly London fair, to the nearby Bloomsbury Holiday Inn.

So what of the future?

Brian Lake has recently taken on the role of ABA Council of ABA/PBFA liaison officer and is keen to foster greater co-operation between the ABA and PBFA. How far and in what ways this co-operation can develop is of course dependent on the wishes of the membership of the respective associations, but some possible areas worthy of investigation have been identified - book fairs, bookshops, book security systems, education, and internet.

Book Fairs:

The joint ABA/PBFA fair in Edinburgh has become an established event, and hopefully with goodwill and commitment on both sides will continue and grow in stature for many years to come. The fair benefits from having respective ABA and PBFA managers who work well together and a venue with adjacent rooms which can cope with the political niceties required to host a 'joint' fair. On purely commercial terms, it is possible that far-travelled ABA members may wish to see a greater influx of strong private or institutional buyers to justify the time and expense of exhibiting at the fair, but generally there is an upbeat and positive mood about the fair that bodes well for the future. Whether there is much scope for developing this kind of joint venture elsewhere in the country is debatable, and it has to be borne in mind that the majority of ABA members who are active fair exhibitors are also PBFA members and already have the opportunity to exhibit at the major PBFA fairs around the UK. If the joint association fair was to be extended in the provinces, I would foresee that the only real opportunity for this would be at a totally new location.

There is no 'joint' element to the major London June fairs, but for the last seven years, the PBFA has run one of their major June fairs in the same geographical location as the ABA Olympia fair, initially in the Commonwealth Institute and latterly in the Hammersmith Novotel Hotel. Both associations benefit from this close proximity, and I would personally like to see a greater effort at promotional co-operation to enhance this joint benefit. I get the impression that the Olympia venue may not be a certainty for future years. If the ABA decides to re-locate at some future date, I would hope that consideration would be given by both associations to the idea of a closer integration of the two fairs.

Bookshops:

I understand that the antiques dealers' association LAPADA has initiated a 'save our small antique shops' campaign. If a similar campaign were to be mounted for the secondhand and antiquarian bookshops, I could see this as being an ideal opportunity for the ABA and PBFA to work together towards a common aim. To the average book buyer, a bookshop is a bookshop, ABA or PBFA labels are not of much concern. If such a campaign was to get off the ground, it would seem sensible to widen the scope to include new bookshops under the Booksellers' Association banner, with the hope of creating an even greater impact.

Book Security:

Information passed through the 'stolen book chain' is already shared between the two associations, with our respective administration personnel working well together. It seems likely that any further developments in the security field will be shared between the two associations.

Internet selling:

ABE comes in for much flak these days with their increasing charges, etc.; but the fact is it is a commercial business, tasked with the job of making a profit, heavily promoted, and rather importantly, books get sold on the site. I see little prospects of the smaller sites impacting much on the dominance of ABE in the near future, but they should be able to provide an alternative and worthwhile service. As one of the few members who has supported both the ABA's ILAB site and PBFA's Booksatpbfa, I would have to admit that apart from one high value sale through ILAB, neither has proved particularly successful in commercial terms; though I remain confident that sales will come ...

With the ILAB site restricted to subscribers from ILAB affiliated associations, there would not appear to be much scope for ABA/PBFA co-operation in this area of internet selling. But Booksatpbfa is open to members of other recognised associations and with the recent surge of PBFA members listing books on the site - over 200 now, it might well be worth ABA members considering signing up, to create the largest British trade run internet selling site. (Booksatpbfa, although operating under the PBFA banner, is a separately constituted company with three PBFA members as directors - two of whom are also ABA members). The ABA has an internet sub-committee; this would seem another area where closer contact between the two associations would be beneficial.

The ABA and PBFA are two distinct associations with very much their own identities, but

I would hope that with goodwill on both sides closer co-operation in many areas can be achieved. After all, in spite of any differences, our core aim is the responsible promotion of buying and selling antiquarian and secondhand books and allied material. It is also noteworthy that the majority of recent Chairmen/Presidents are prominent members of both associations.

Finally, some personal reflections on the two associations.

Back in 1976, with a young family to support, and probably too short an apprenticeship, I rashly made the decision to enter full-time bookselling in my own right. Having heard something about the fledgling PBFA, I signed up, exhibited at my first fair in Oxford in 1977, and thus began a long and fruitful association, which I can honestly say proved to be the most important influence on my bookselling career. The PBFA fairs offered markets that would otherwise have been unavailable to me, the chance to meet and learn from other booksellers, and a very generous level of support and advice from some of its members, in particular founder member and ex-ABA bookseller, Gerry Mosdell (it is not that common to experience a fellow exhibitor buying a book for £50 and returning some hours later with a substantial wad of notes after having moved it on at a healthy profit).

Some years later I duly applied for ABA membership, but the expected offers of quality maritime stock from my fellow members never materialised, and I did for some time wonder what benefit, apart from being recognised as a 'professional antiquarian bookseller', my hefty subscription brought me.

I did not feel that my stock warranted the expense or prestige of Olympia or its predecessors. I never felt the urge to transport my books half way around the globe for a book fair. My experience of an early Chelsea fair comprised being stuck in a corridor, achieving a modest take, and being verbally and nearly physically assaulted by an irate local resident during the packing up chaos, with a subsequent lack of enthusiasm to return. The bi-annual Edinburgh fair, always renowned for its social scene, seemed latterly to have lost the business success of the occasion. Maybe I should have gone to Jersey.

Ironically, one of the few tangible benefits of membership (apart from being royally entertained by our ANZAAB colleagues during the 2004 ILAB pre-congress in Sydney) has come with the growth of the internet, where the ABA/ILAB accreditation can prove advantageous, and there is a previously unavailable opportunity to buy quality titles from fellow ILAB members around the globe at attractively discounted prices.

During my time as secretary of the Scottish branch of the ABA, I did try and encourage other full-time booksellers to apply for membership, but found it hard to convince them of the merits - though I am pleased to note that Mr. Pringle has finally gotten round to joining.

Don't get me wrong, I am proud to be able to display the ABA logo, and do consider it a sign of achievement and recognition of a certain standard in our line of business, but will this be sufficient incentive to continue to attract new members in the future?

Oh, I nearly forgot another 'benefit' of ABA membership - a one and only invitation to join an auction ring (note to 'standards' committee, this was many years ago!)

EVENTS & DEADLINES, 2007

Sept	5	ABA Council Meeting
	7	Newsletter Copy Date
	13-14	Prague Book Fair
	28-30	Australian Antiquarian Book Fair (ANZAAB)
Oct	1-3	Berlin Book Fair
	25-27	Amsterdam Antiquarian Book & Print Fair (NVvA)
Nov	2-3	Chelsea Book Fair (ABA)
	7	ABA Council Meeting
	9	Newsletter Copy Date
	16-18	Boston Book Fair (ABAA)
	30 - 1	China International Book Fair, Hong Kong
Dec	1-2	Book Trade History Conference
	12	ABA Council Meeting & Annual Christmas Party
Feb	15-15	Edinburgh Book Fair
June	5-7	Olympia Book Fair

THE HUB THEORY

Antiquarian Booksellers Association
Over One Hundred Years Of Bookselling Excellence

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Welcome to the ABA
(This site is currently being re-developed)

Who we are
The Antiquarian Booksellers Association, the ABA, is the senior trade body for dealers in rare and fine books, manuscripts and allied materials in the British Isles and elsewhere.

What we do
The Association holds a small number of book fairs each year. There is a major International Fair in June at Olympia which remains one of the most prestigious fairs in the world. In the autumn there is the Chelsea Fair in London's King's Road, one of the friendliest and most popular fairs in the trade calendar, and a fair is also held in Edinburgh in the spring. For further useful information both on the Association and on the day to day business of locating and purchasing rare and collectable books, please refer to our information page.

Out of Print and Into Profit. Commissioned to celebrate the Centenary of the Association, this book is available through the ABA office and the British Library.

International League of Antiquarian Booksellers
Forthcoming Events
The Chelsea Book Fair
Book Trade History Conference 2007
Royal Academy of Arts
Making History Antiquaries in Britain 1707-2007

How the ABA can help maximize your ability to sell books. Some random thoughts on bookselling & the Internet.

By Jonathan Kearns
jonathan@harringtonbooks.co.uk

- Keeping up with the pace of technology is not an option without
 - a) Large amounts of money and
 - b) an active and willing community.
 We have comparatively little money and the community as a whole resists group behaviour as, perversely enough, part of its communal identity. Therefore another non-technological solution must be found.
- The process of online selling differs from traditional bookselling methods in that all web shopping is by definition comparison shopping. Traditional bookselling is guided browsing within a closed environment.
- Decreasing rarity of an object when exposed across the surface of a larger and larger consumer base is now a central factor.
- Items that prior to the internet revolution were considered rarer than hen's teeth can now be seen to be found in twenty or thirty different locations around the world at twenty or thirty differing states and prices.
- The internet thrives on transparency, the rare book trade frequently depends upon opacity.
- The rare book trade is based around 'artisan salesmanship' where the book-dealer's professional expertise and reputation are as much a saleable commodity as the product he purveys. This effectively means that the bookseller does not support the process of comparison shopping. He or she instead states: "Come to me, I have the knowledge to find what you desire". The rare book is a product purchased, catalogued, categorised and priced on many differing levels directly linked to the comparative experience and expertise of the bookseller concerned.
- The internet has the effect of making such expertise available to all, at least at a 'voyeuristic' level. In order to sell on the net you must be happy to subject yourself to the process of comparison. Most book-dealers of any standing catalogue to a more than acceptable degree which levels the playing field somewhat, but only between professional dealers.
- This means that what professional dealers are doing on the net is providing a pricing, cataloguing and bibliographical

guide to their less qualified competition. This effectively means that a sizeable proportion of the bookseller's 'value' is lost to a process of informational osmosis. Whilst this doesn't greatly affect dealers purchasing from dealers, it has a profound effect upon the confidence and buying ability of customers from outside the book trade (who are hopefully the majority). Effectively they lose the ability to tell the difference between the ABA or ILAB member of fifty years experience and the bloke from Amazon z-shops who has copy/pasted his description from someone else, taken a strangely indeterminate photo (the professional dealer all too often hasn't taken any photo at all!) and priced his book £200 lower. The book may be inferior, un-collated and downright wrong, but it doesn't look it ... it merely looks like the posh git with the initials after his name reckons he can get away with overcharging. The customer may send the book back, may complain to a vast combine with a customer service department based in suburban Ulan Batur, and may even receive

recompense, eventually. In the end however, because the customer cannot tell the difference between the ABA dealer and the know-nothing on Ebay, it is the ABA dealer who suffers more having thenceforth to deal with demands for photographs, refusal to pay through normal channels and a general suggestion that, despite the fact that he has the copy of Bleak House the customer desperately wants, he can't be trusted as far as his out of condition tweed-clad body could be hurled.

- The book trade differs from most other online business models in that it openly and actively defies regulation.
- For most large book sites **regulation is a pre-requisite**, without the promise of automated shipping, guaranteed availability, high fill rates and dealer ratings capability they cannot make deals with internet colossi like Amazon and Ebay and thus cannot expand beyond a certain point.
- On the internet **size equals trust** - however maddening and foolish this may be.

It is believed by customers that they will get a better (and most importantly more secure and answerable) service from a vast Leviathan like Ebay or Amazon than they will from an individual dealer's website, especially on sites where the dealers don't post photographs and in fact do little else other than have a contact address and an apparently incomprehensible list of books for sale. No links to other sites and resources, no visible security and very clearly the bare minimum of effort. In the bricks and mortar world these same characteristics coupled with creaky floorboards and a dog in front of the Calor gas heater may signify character and devotion to the trade. Online they suggest dodgy and unreliable.

- The book trade and the online book giants under the current climate therefore have a limited degree of mutual usefulness. We cannot help them expand, and if they can't expand they must charge more and if they charge too much we will leave. Clearly this arrangement can go nowhere.
- It also has to be pointed out that the only reason thousands upon thousands of people have heard of most of our firms at all is not through ILAB, or The Russell Fair or adverts in the Book & Magazine Collector but through Abebooks; tragically at present they are our best advertisement. Many ABA members take an active role in driving revenue and customers towards Abe by using their free search facility.
- ILAB presents itself as impenetrably trade-centric with nary a thought for the customer looking for a book who turns up there by accident or without a PhD. Biblio is decent enough but small and centred around the mid-west US trade, Alibris has been hampered by switching business models mid-stream and is thus flagging and the PBFA site is technically challenged in comparison. The future for the small independent bookseller most probably lies in a variation of the model adopted by iBooknet; a kind of friendly, loose affiliation grouped together by a uniformity of standards and practices rather than by the fact that they all like hiking or have cats called Mr.Crispy (which is the impression gained from trawling through the US equivalents).

ABA INSURANCE POLICY

With the approval and active co-operation of the Association Richard Thompson (Insurance Brokers) Ltd. have carried out an in-depth review of the insurance requirements of the antiquarian book trade. The policy now put forward, endorsed and recommended by the ABA, sets a wholly new standard of cover at the lowest possible premium. The policy provides:

- Exclusive rates for ABA members*
- Free defective title cover*
- Worldwide transit cover*
- Book fairs, including cancellations*
- Full theft cover, including shoplifting*
- Damage caused in repair & restoration*
- Optional basis of valuation*
- Enhanced computer cover*
- Stock off the premises, Business interruption*
- No "averaging" on claims*

Enquiries to Richard Thompson
 Richard Thompson (Insurance Brokers) Ltd, Kilnhanger, Farley Heath,
 Albury, Guildford, Surrey GU5 9EW.
 Tel: 01483 890930 / Fax: 01483 890933

So: We make ourselves immune.

The best and simplest way to do this would be to return to what we know. Providing the best books backed up by the highest levels of knowledge and expertise. To provide the same feelings of confidence and appreciation for our

customers buying online as we provide to customers who walk into our shops. Knowledge and experience are our major strengths and things for which at least in our bricks and mortar bookselling world, we are well known.

The ABA site becomes a resource hub almost like a book trade search engine, stuffed to the gills with web friendly information and resources; galleries of book pictures (all linked to their sellers), glossaries of arcane book speak, articles on collecting Conan Doyle and Atlases, how to spot a fore-edge painting, how to buy a book at auction and how the auction houses work, accounts of the biggest fairs worldwide, biographies of notable authors, lists of collections in institutions. Couple this with endless links to members websites, members catalogues exhibited online, regular updates on new stock highlights and an overall impression of a dynamic and expanding trade that communicates both within itself and with its valued customers. Done effectively, it will mean that people begin their internet searching with us rather than with Google, Abebooks or any of the places they have previously originated from.

Trading on the web depends on providing value to our customers; the equivalent of the excitement of a catalogue opening or the first minutes of a major book-fair; the electronic equivalent of the patient answers to all those questions that new collectors ask when they enter our shops for the first time with their tentative "I've always wanted to collect Dickens first editions, how do I start?". These are things we do as a matter of course and professional dedication when we stand in our shops or present our catalogues, but for some reason we expect that all we have to do on the internet is say "Near fine, some foxing. I can't be bothered taking a photograph, no I don't know how much shipping is going to be, my partner's grandson takes care of that and he won't be in til Wednesday" and the customer will automatically just hand over their credit card details secure in the knowledge they're dealing with a professional. The internet has no intention of going away, the number of people using it as a reflex action whenever they want something can only increase. It is the perfect tool for revitalizing a currently fragile trade and restoring a disintegrating heritage.

Each and every member must get some sort of web presence, even if it is only a single page write-up with a link to the ABA site. The ABA is easily capable of assisting in this goal, and each site will link and re-link to the central ABA site, colleagues websites and their own personally recommended and chosen links. We lobby institutions, other trade entities, affili-

ated fair organisers, collectors groups, appreciation societies, newspapers and web authorities to link to us and our members. We also encourage them to share their resources; thus an article on the Irish Guards written by a member of the Kipling society, and an eyewitness memoir of Churchill turn up on the ABA site complete with in-text product links to dealers specialising in Kipling and Churchill. Reciprocal linking and dynamic, informative content are two of the simplest and most influential tools available for raising the profile (and therefore the customer base) of the antiquarian book trade. We actively submit our site and those of our members to search engines worldwide. Effectively we work towards a goal whereby a prospective book buyer enters their search criteria into their engine of choice and we are the result; some facet of the professional rare book trade takes care of that customer, not a bunch of Fortune 500 wannabes in Dusseldorf, nor yet some faceless suit who wouldn't know a Gutenberg from a Battenburg - but US in all our dusty glory.

This requires very little in the way of technology, it merely requires hard work and attention to detail, things we as a trade are known for. Statistics need to be tracked, search terms regularly updated, we need to familiarise ourselves with the intricacies of how people find books on the net and place ourselves in their path. These practices are proven to work, they work relatively quickly and they cost very little. They require little more than willingness to participate.

Jonathan Kearns is a member of the Internet subcommittee which is redesigning the ABA website, setting up the ABA as a web host using Nativespace, creating template websites for members who don't have one (contact Jonathan), trying to persuade Rockingstone to improve the ILAB site and working on 'clip-on' searchable databases for stock on members' websites. There will be a major announcement about all these initiatives in the September Newsletter.

Newsletter Copy Dates

7th September 2007

9th November 2007

**Your articles, photographs etc., to either
ABA Office or Brian Lake, Jarndyce:
books@jarndyce.co.uk
Tel: 0207 631 4220**

Lost, Stolen or Mislaid.

During the writing of the Centenary Book, a bound volume of the ABA Newsletter 1982 - 1990, together with a file of Council Meeting Minutes 1984 - 1988, have gone missing.

If this rings any bells, please return them to the office. With many thanks in anticipation of their return...

ABA Office Staff

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

NEW MEMBERS

Ashley Baynton-Williams
PO Box 27391, London E12 5WG
Tel: 020 8989 1859:
e-mail: abwmaps@btinternet.com

Giles Lyon (Bodyline Books Ltd)
The Oast House, Park Row, Castle Street,
Farnham, Surrey GU9 7JH
01252 727222 Fax: 01252 737333
Mob: 07981 128431
info@bodylinebooks.com
Web: www.bodylinebooks.com
*Specialities: Sports Books, especially
Wisdens, Cricket, Football, Golf, Rugby
Union, Ephemera, Signed Material*

Natalie Galustian
(Natalie Galustian Rare Books)
59b Onslow Gardens, London SW7 3QF
07956273167
books@nataliegallustian.com
Web: www.nataliegallustian.com
*Specialities: 19th and 20th Century First
Editions, Manuscripts, African and
American Literature, Post Colonial Lit-
erature, Gambling, Gaming*

ADDITIONAL NOMINEES

Georgina Hallgate (Lucius Books)
Janet Sharp (Grove Rare Books)

CHANGE OF DETAILS

Castle Bookshop
castlebooks@dsl.pipex.com

Margaret Eaton – retired member
New address: 11 Spencer Road, Chiswick,
London W4 3SS. Tel: 020 8994 5252

Julia Elton (Elton Engineering Books)
e-mail address: books@abutment.co.uk

Robert Frew Ltd.
New premises: 8 Thurloe Place, London
SW7 2RX
Tel: 020 7590 6650 Fax: 020 7590 6651
Opening hours: Monday to Friday
10:00am to 6:00pm, Saturday and Sunday
to be decided
All other details the same.

Andrew Hunter - Rare Books
New address and phone/fax: 17 Chandos
Avenue, Little Ealing, London W5 4EP
Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 20 8758 0989

Lucius Books

Please note that this business has been
de-registered and is now a partnership

operated by James and Georgina Hallgate.
Lucius Books have moved, just along the
road, to: 41 Fossgate, York YO1 5TF.
All other details remain the same.

Benjamin Spademan
Landline no longer used, please use mo-
bile telephone: 07768 076772

W A & J S Meeuws
(Thornton's Bookshop)
New address: The Old Barn, Walnut
Court, Faringdon SN7 7JH
No telephone enquiries. e-mail (remains
the same) or fax (01367 241544).

RESIGNATION

Viscount Bangor. (Hesketh and Ward)

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

An application for membership has been
received from:

David Headley
Goldsborobooks Ltd
7 Cecil Court, London WC2N 4EZ
Proposed by Nigel Williams and Tim
Bryars, and seconded by Kenneth Fuller
and Angus O'Neill.

*If members have any comments to make
on this application, either supporting or
against, they are invited to do so (pref-
erably in writing) to the Admissions
Convenor, Julian Rota, at Bertram Rota
Ltd., or to John Critchley at the ABA of-
fice. All comments will be treated in the
strictest confidence.*

David Headley's Goldsboro Books Ltd
was established in September 1999. From
an attractive shop in Cecil Court he and
his fellow director Daniel Gedeon (who
had already traded for four years together
as a partnership between two book col-
lectors) specialise in new and recent
signed fiction and carry an interesting
stock of earlier modern first editions.
Through the shop and an excellent
website (which has a Book of the Month
section and competitions) they are able
to attract customers new to collecting
books. There are some 5,000 first editions
in stock and the importance of condition
is taken seriously.

BIRTHS...

Please send notices to
books@jarndyce.co.uk - or the ABA
office, admin@aba.co.uk

BIRTHS

None this time

DEATHS

FRED KAHN - It is with great sadness
that we announce the death of Fred Kahn,
husband of Helen Kahn, on July 7th, 2007,
after a long and brave battle with cancer.
He is also survived by one brother, two
sons and six grandchildren, and was pre-
deceased by his only daughter. Funeral
service and burial will be in Montreal on
Tuesday, July 10th. In lieu of flowers, do-
nations may be made in his name to the
Thos Fisher Rare Books Library, c/o Ri-
chard Landon, 120 St. George St., Toronto,
ON M5S 1A5.

JEFFREY FURLOUGH THOMAS

1938-2007, the Californian scholar-
bookman, passed away on June 2nd after
an 11 month battle with illness.

JOHN PINCHES

We are very sorry to report the death in
July of John Pinches, husband of Mrs R
Pinches of Heraldry Today.

ERIC T. MOORE 1912 - 2007

An obituary by John Leeson

*Eric Moore had trained as an artist
at Hornsey College of Art and for a while
earned a precarious living as a writer
and illustrator. His love and knowledge
of books developed during the war. As a
devout Christian and pacifist he had
registered as a conscientious objector
and spent most of the hostilities working
for the London Ambulance Service. On
his off-duty days he supplemented his in-
come by working as a courier, collect-
ing books from publishing houses and
delivering them to shops in the city. The
job inevitably put him in touch with
many trade experts from whom he gained
valuable knowledge of pricing, buying
and selling books of all kinds.*

*At the end of the war, Eric was offered
a full-time position at Hatchards, work-
ing both in the rare book department in
Piccadilly and the stock room at
Brompton. It was here that Eric's ambi-
tion to open his own shop was nurtured.*

DEATHS...

'I would have liked to have opened one in the City specialising in art books,' he once recalled. 'I almost made the jump when a small property became available in St Mary Axe. The rent was £4 a week but, as I was still saving to buy a house, I could not take a gamble. At the time I had two uncles at Lloyds who could easily have raised a loan for me, but my Non-conformist upbringing put all ideas of borrowing money out of my head.'

In 1947, he answered an advertisement in the Bookseller. Countryside Libraries wanted to develop a secondhand department at their headquarters in Hitchin. The firm was owned by Basil Donne-Smith, a Quaker and soon a good working relationship developed between them. Eric worked from a small first-floor office overlooking the Market Place in Hitchin and set to work enlarging the company's stock of second-hand and antiquarian books. It was not long before he had to persuade his employer to find him more space. So the wide staircase of the Book House was lined with shelves from floor to ceiling and extra rooms were rented in adjoining premises. From here, an ever-burgeoning collection of works on Theology, Psychology, Philosophy and History were sorted, examined, valued and listed. Catalogues were mailed to collectors all over the world, America and Japan proving particularly lucrative markets. At first, because he did not drive a car until he was in his 40s, Eric Moore's hunting ground was limited more-or-less to the area covered by Countryside Libraries. When visiting branches Donne-Smith would take his buyer with him, dropping him off at a pre-arranged private address and then picking him up with any purchases he had made on the way back.

Eric had been working for Countryside Libraries for 16 years when the Donne-Smiths decided to sell their business and retire to Somerset. Donne-Smith had been disposing of his bookshops one by one throughout the latter part of the 1950s and his headquarters in Hitchin was the last to go. One day, directors of Foyles bookshop came to look over The Book House with a view to buying it as a going concern. Much to Eric Moore's relief, nothing came of it – and in September 1962, Donne-Smith sold him the shop's complete stock of antiquarian and second hand books, together with his Austin car, for the sum of £2,500. Most

important of all, he allowed Eric to continue to rent the upstairs rooms of The Book House so that he could continue trading until he found suitable premises to open his own shop.

That day came two years later when Eric acquired a pair of 19th century cottages in Bridge Street, one of which had



been a small inn - The Post Boy - between 1830 and 1922. Despite the cottages (Numbers 24 & 25) being earmarked for demolition as part of a road improvement scheme, Eric was able to rent them from Hertfordshire County Council and convert them into the double-fronted bookshop that still exists today. His move from The Book House during the winter of 1964-65 took several weeks because, by that time, his stock had grown to more than 30,000 volumes plus a large collection of antiquarian maps and prints.

After a number of years the road improvement scheme was abandoned, Eric, to his great relief, was then able to buy the shop's premises from the Council.

'Eric T Moore – Bookseller' soon built up a thriving business that was drawing customers and dealers from all over the land.

Eric's venture into publishing came in the 1970s when he bravely undertook to reprint the two volumes of Reginald Hine's *The History of Hitchin*.

Eric produced a stylish prospectus that reflected perfectly the quality of the original book. It did, however, contain a warning; publication would go ahead only if 300 firm orders were placed in

...& MARRIAGES

advance. Nobody need have worried on that score. By the time the deadline of September 15th 1972 was reached, more than 800 orders had been placed and – to his delight – Eric was obliged to double the print run to 1,000.

Two years later, Eric received the same sort of response from subscribers when he launched plans for a re-print of *Hitchin Worthies*.

Later in the decade – in conjunction with North Hertfordshire Museums - he published the third of his personal trilogy of reprints with *Old Hitchin – Portrait of an English Market Town*, which features many of the photographs of Thomas Benwell Latchmore, his son Thomas William and Henry Moulden. This turned out to be so popular that, after an initial print run of 2000 copies a second edition had to be printed.

In 1997 Eric celebrated his 50th anniversary as a bookseller in Hitchin when 70 guests crowded into the bookshop, which was subsequently sold some years later and continues to this day.

Eric always looked upon bookselling as second best to his original ambition to become a successful artist but found the trade 'an amazingly varied pursuit and the most humane, sociable, ill-organised, yet absorbing form of commerce to be found anywhere'.

MARRIAGES

Tim Bryars is to marry Miss Rupinder Kaur at Islington Town Hall on August 31st. Reception to follow at Dr Johnson's House, Gough Square.

Susannah Moore, partner in the Castle Bookshop, Llandyssil, was married to David Hodgson on June 2nd at St Nicholas Church, Montgomery, and afterwards a reception was held in a marquee in our garden, the event enjoyed in glorious weather. They are at present living near Ardoch Roman Fort - very appropriate as they are both archaeologists.

William Nassau-Lake, son of Brian Lake and Janet Nassau of Jarndyce, is to marry Susan O'Connell-Davidson on Saturday 25 August 2007 at Combe House, near Honiton, in Devon. The ceremony is preceded by a Barbeque on Friday and followed by a Grand Cricket Match on Sunday.

Annual Conference on Book Trade History

Music and the Book Trade

From the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century

Saturday 1 & Sunday 2 December 2007

At the Foundling Museum, 40 Brunswick Street, London WC1 1AZ



This year's Annual Book Trade History Conference brings together the latest research by historians of the book and musicologists.

The programme will include

Donald Burrows (Open University)

John Walsh and his Handel Editions

Iain Fenlon (Cambridge)

The Music Trade in Renaissance Iberia

Anna Jones (Cambridge)

"A Curious Collection of Musick Books ... Also all sorts of Ruled Paper and Books." The Music Book Trade in mid-seventeenth century England: an overview.

Richard Lockett (Cambridge)

The Playfords and the Purcells

Rupert Ridgewell (British Library)

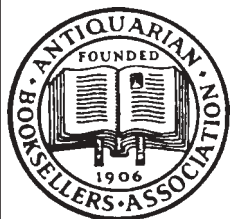
Music in the Artaria Ledgers, 1784-1827

Stephen Roe (Sotheby's)

The sale catalogue of C. F. Abel 1787

Jeremy Smith (Colorado, USA)

Turning a New Leaf: The East Music-Publishing Firm and the Jacobean Succession



The Conference is organized by Michael Harris, Giles Mandelbrote and Robin Myers, in association with the Antiquarian Booksellers Association.

The full fee of £80 (one day £50) includes conference, lunches and access to the Foundling Museum. A limited number of reduced-rate places, sponsored by the Bibliographical Society, will be available to registered students.



Sponsored by The Bibliographical Society

For a booking form, or for more information, please contact:

Antiquarian Booksellers Association

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