

Aldus Society Notes

Winter 2007-2008

Volume 8, No. 2

Aldus Still Collects

November's Aldus Society meeting brought everyone together for another "Aldus Collects" program, where members share their collecting interests through brief presentations that highlight interesting items or experiences they have encountered as they pursued their passions. This installment's participants included Amy Bostic, Tony Clark, Bill Radloff, Carol Shelton (equipped with flash cards, no less), Ed Hoffman, Don Rice and Kassie Rose, with Jay Hoster as moderator. As usual, a good time was had by all.



(Images courtesy of George Cowmeadow Bauman.)

Aldus Calendar

January

10 (Regular Program) — Former Aldus Society President and Curator of the Ohio State University Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, Geoff Smith, will be speaking on the American Puritan Library when he will talk about those books new to the New England colonies that had profound influence on later American thought and letters.

February

14 (Regular Meeting) — Come celebrate Valentine's Day with the Aldus Society when we welcome Jared Gardner, Associate Professor of English & Film at the Ohio State University, for his presentation on graphic novels.

March

13 (Regular Meeting) — At our March gathering avid book collector and retired Professor of Speech Communication, Dr. Jerry Tarver, will tell us about his extensive collection of pre-1900 works on rhetoric, elocution and oratory.

April

10 (Regular Meeting) — April promises to be a special month when Boston publisher David Godine comes to share his thoughts on children's illustrated books (hopefully, with a few publishing anecdotes thrown in for good measure).

May

8 (Regular Meeting) — Our final regular program of the season is usually a special one, and this year will be no different. Steven Galbraith, formerly with the OSU Rare Books and Manuscripts Library and now Curator of Books at the Folger Shakespeare Library, will be returning to Columbus to share his recent bibliophilic adventures.



Aldus Society Meetings

Regular meetings of the Aldus Society are held at 7:30 PM on the second Thursday of the month at

**The Thurber Center
91 Jefferson Avenue
Columbus, Ohio**

☞ Socializing Begins One-Half Hour Before ☞



Visit the Aldus Society web site for up-to-date information about our programs and activities, in-depth articles about many of our speakers, and links to other book related organizations.

www.AldusSociety.com

The Aldus Society

TRUSTEES, 2006-2007

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An Irish Idyll

Bill Evans

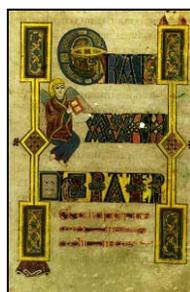
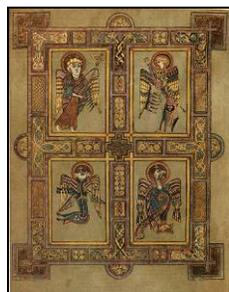
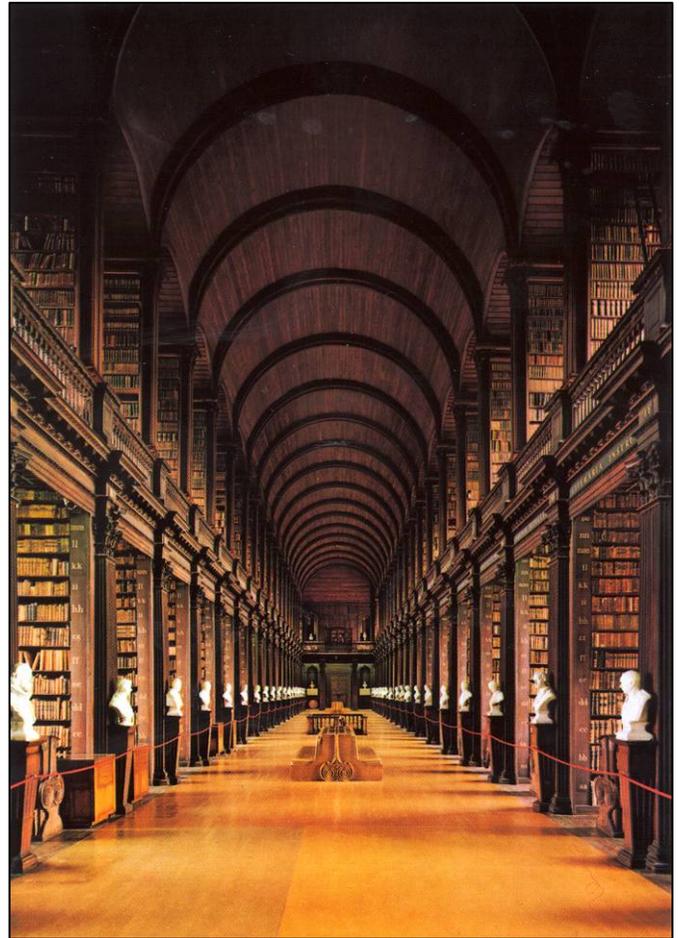
My favorite moment in a recent trip to Ireland was not the first breathtaking view of the Dingle Peninsula where forty shades of peaceful green meet the restless blue Atlantic; or the glorious sound of Celtic singing which seemed to be everywhere; or even the creamy taste of un-pasteurized Guinness – although that was really close! These sights, sounds and tastes were all memorable, but the best of all was a smell, the smell of old books.

We had just seen the Book of Kells at the Trinity College Library in Dublin. It's now displayed on the ground floor of the Old Library complete with a multimedia presentation and crowds of people. Thirty years ago, Marcia and I saw it, simply displayed, without fanfare in the two-storey high Long Room upstairs. Times change and the gift shop is now so crowded you can't move, so I suppose that's considered an improvement! Anyway we wanted to walk up the stairs to see what was now in the Long Room and about three steps from the top the smell hit me. Old leather and rag paper; thousands and thousands of books crammed into row upon row of open shelves running perpendicular to the 65 meter long gallery. A barrel-vaulted ceiling and marble busts placed down either side of the room add the visuals, but it was the smell that got to me. That smell of ancient knowledge and hidden adventure. The smell of serious study and idle hours. I could have stayed in that room for the rest of the day just breathing.

The oldest surviving harp in Ireland is on display in that room, an iconic symbol of Ireland, and I probably should have paid more attention to it. Marcia remembers it well. To me it was one harp versus the smell of 200,000 books. No contest.

Read, Eat, Sleep

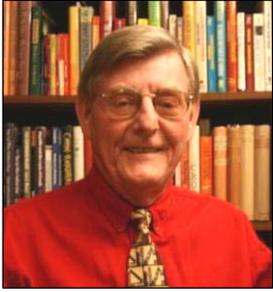
Bill



Bookstore-ies

George Cowmeadow Bauman

Bookstore-ing in Paris (Part 4):



This continuing store-y is about visiting bookstores in Paris in September 2006, our first time in France. Linda and I were walking toward our destination – the current edition of Shakespeare and Company bookstore. George Whitman had run this store since 1951, and named it after Sylvia

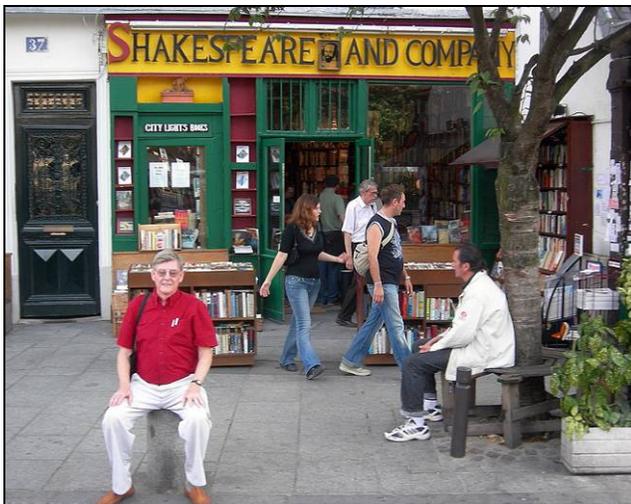
Beach's original bookstore with that name, from which she published James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

In the last installment, we had just crossed Quai Montebello along the Seine looked to the left, and there was the Shakespeare and Company bookstore.



Between the busy quay and the set-back bookstore is a shaded walkway and a flowered mini-park, creating an esplanade in front of the store, and a sense of centering on Shakespeare and Company. Two canopied cafés were to its right, which became regular stops on our Paris walks.

Naturally, the first thing to do was have Linda take a picture of me in front of the store.



After facing the camera, I turned around and faced the store's exterior, savoring and absorbing the moment.

There were two entrances; the one on the right under the neon-on-wood sign was for the main shop. The door on the left led to the antiquarian room, where Jeremy Mercer lived for several months collecting information, stories, and experience for his book, *Time Was Soft There: A Paris Sojourn at Shakespeare and Company* (2005).

I approached the main door reverently, though Whitman – inside and up in his third floor apartment over the shop – would have laughed at the hesitancy, even as he would have reveled in my reverence at what he had done as a bookseller in Paris.

Stepping inside the shrine, my eyes were too slow to fill the greed of my desire to take it all in instantaneously. Walking into *any* bookstore new to me is always a thrill; now I was walking into perhaps the most renowned bookstore in the world. I don't overstate me awe of the moment.

The front desk sat in the middle of the first packed room. Narrow aisles ran left and right, like a canyon splitting in two, and the cashier was at a desk in the delta, in the prow of a ship of books.

As was a large black cat, snoozing away on the desk-high display of books attached to the front of the desk. I was in heaven. As my Edward Gorey T-shirt reads, "Cats and books/Life is good."

When the young woman at the desk finished ringing up a customer, counting out the change in French, I asked her if they had a copy of Mercer's *Time Was Soft There*, using that request as an ice-breaker into the store's ambiance.

An English accent graced the "No, we don't" I received in response.

Surprised, I asked her why, since the book was about that very shop.

"Because George doesn't like the book," she declared, assuming that anyone asking for the Mercer book would certainly not have to be told who "George" was.

As we planned that afternoon to take the Left Bank/Latin Quarter walking tour recommended by trusty travel-guide Rick Steves, I decided to put off to another day asking if it were possible to meet the master bibliopole.

I did roam the jumble of rooms, stepping over the wishing well in the floor with many international coins, and squeezing between books and people to progress to the cavelike backrooms, past shelf-ladders which would give nightmares to American insurance agents.

The book topics ranged as widely as the library of the UN, with literature predominant. As a book dealer I couldn't help but wonder what really *was* the market for such obscure books.

I was surprised at how expensive all the books were, including used copies, which the store also sold. With the \$ so weak against the €, books to bring back home were out of my range. Of all the 25 or so countries we've visited over the years, France was the only place from which I did not ship purchased books for my store.

Browsers were everywhere, and constantly jostled by bookstore-tourists like me, agog in Paradise. I wasn't looking for books to read; I was looking to read the bookstore.

Linda and I climbed a narrow, steep wooden staircase to the second floor, where all the books in all the bookcases were *not* for sale. It was called The Library, where staffers and privileged customers hung out and read.

I took a few pictures, my heart singing at being in this very special bookstore.

As we left, the front desk woman remembered that I'd asked about the Mercer book and said, with a strong French accent, "If you are going to be in Paris on Sunday, you could come back and have tea with everyone."

I said we would, and *avec très joyeux* walked back into the sunny autumn Parisian afternoon, knowing we'd be back.

And we were, almost every evening.

We developed a daily routine of interesting Parisian adventures in justifiably-famous museums, cafés associated with literary figures, and stunning historical plazas. The click of my digital camera was as constant as our "Oh, look at that!" We took long walks all over Paris, dawdling often in sidewalk cafés to make journal notes.

But no matter how late the hour was or where we had been – Montmartre at sunset, a café facing the Eiffel Tower as the dazzling lights came on at 8, being whistled out of the Luxembourg Gardens at twilight – we made a habit of walking to our Ille de la Cité apartment past two Parisian institutions: Shakespeare & Company and Notre Dame.

One of our special destinations was 8 rue Dupuytren, which was the location of the former Shakespeare and Company owned by Sylvia Beach, 1919-1941. We paused at the street's beginning, absorbing the scene, familiar to so many literary ex-pats between the wars. Joyce trod those cobblestones half-blind, looking for a publisher and found Sylvia Beach. Hemingway and his soldier-buddies returned for Paris' liberation to greet Sylvia, and granted her request that he clean out the last of the rooftop snipers on the street. Was that the ghost of Gertrude and Alice wisping up the street beyond No. 8? The street was visually empty, but in our mental vision, it was crowded with characters from one of Paris' heydays.

We walked up the street, along the old storefronts, looking – as so many had before us – for No. 8.

The shop may have been a bookstore at one time, but now it was a gray, desolate, empty room, most recently a boutique. Once again I let my imagination loose as I gazed through the dirty front window. I could almost see Beach hosting Paris' literati – selling or renting books, handing out mail to those ex-pats who used her address when their own was changing and uncertain.

Next door was an antiquarian bookshop. Thinking to meet a colleague and learn his impressions of being located next to Beach's bookstore, I pushed into the dark, book-filled room. A solid, hunched-over man looked up from his desk and glared at us, with no word of greeting.

"Bonjour, monsieur," I said pleasantly.

He continued to stare.

"Parlez-vous Francaise?" I asked, unnerved by his silent attitude.

"What do you want?" he said gruffly in thick French-accented English.

Surprised at his lack of civility, I nonetheless continued. "I'm a bookdealer from America and was wanting to visit the site of the former Shakespeare and Company and..."

He interrupted to say, "There, over there!", thrusting his head toward the wall whose other side was once lined with Beach's bookcases.

When I went to continue to ask him more, he ended the "conversation" and dismissed me by putting his head back down over the antiquarian book he was examining in the yellow light of a banker's lamp, magnifying glass in his left hand.

After photographing the exterior plaque commemorating Beach's Shakespeare and Company, we walked up the slight grade to the other end of rue Dupeyren silently, letting past and present fuse our memorable experience with the literary history of the street. We had paid due homage to one of the meccas of bookselling.



I still hadn't met George Whitman, and I was hopeful to do so at tea on Sunday.

So after a memorable Sunday morning mass at Notre Dame, the incense rising to the high vaulted nave some 60 meters above, I headed for Shakespeare and Company.

Linda was heading off to Paris' famous film museum via the Metro, so I had as much time as needed if I got lucky and was able to meet Whitman. We agreed to meet at five at the Café de la Bucherie next door to the bookstore, looking forward to sharing unique stories.

And my afternoon qualified as unique.

Book Hunting Notes

Bill Rich

I entered Shakespeare & Co., gave sable-black Kitty a couple of strokes and asked the very attractive young blonde at the front desk if it would be possible to meet George Whitman.

The young woman smiled and said with a British accent, “You know he’s 92 now, and spends most of the time up-stairs in his apartment, sleeping a lot. He doesn’t come down here too often.”

Damn.

Presenting my Acorn Bookshop business card, I introduced myself and told her that I’d read and heard so much about Whitman that I had really been looking forward to meeting my colleague in the book business. I was hoping that mention of Whitman and me sharing collegueship would get me past the pleasant but unpromising gatekeeper. No such luck.

She did encourage me to attend the tea later at 4, “though George doesn’t show up very often.”

Looking forward to at least the tea, I began browsing the place as only one can do when they don’t have someone waiting for them, a real luxury for bookstore browsers.

I savored the moment, sticking my head and camera into all corners and alcoves and wishing wells. I tried to sponge up every sensation: listening to conversations in multiple languages; watching bibliophiles and bookstore-lovers move around in the several small, crowded rooms; touching a few volumes here and there and letting my hand caress railings and ladders and doorjams; sniffing the funky atmosphere produced by the combination of age and books and people packed closely together; doing everything but actually tasting the books themselves.

“Excuse me, sir?”

I turned from the Poetry section, and it was the smiling woman I’d met up front. She had surprising news.

“I spoke with George and gave him your card, and he would like to meet you,” she said in a British accent that should have given her identity away, but I was now focused on meeting the famous George Whitman.



To be continued, with George Whitman to make a substantial, unforgettable appearance.



3-Decker Novels

Collecting early English novels in first editions leads to the immediate realization that the favored format for many of these is multi-volume publica-

tion. The great 18th century novels were like this: Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela*, (1740-41), is an epistolary novel in which a teen-age serving maid resists the advances of the young man of the house through two incredibly tedious volumes, only to marry him, with virtue and, amazingly, self-respect both intact at the end. A year later, Richardson published a two-volume sequel, portraying the happiness of the now properly hitched Pamela as a wife and mother. Four volumes in all, whose emetic properties will challenge any modern reader to go through them and keep all food down. Other classic novels, often in picaresque form, run from two volumes, as in Smollett’s *Roderick Random*, (1748), to as many as six volumes in, for example, Fielding’s *Tom Jones*, (1749). Why the multiple volumes? Well, the novels *are* long. And, to the dismay of the many stern moralists and kill-joys in English society, these books began to be read by all literate levels of society, including the young ladies of the household and even the maid servants. Readers were more likely to pick up a small volume, rather than handle a massive one-volume publication that would require considerable forearm development.



By the early 19th century, first publication in three volumes was a favorite format for novels. In the early decades of the century, the bindings were usually paper covered boards, with paper or cloth spines with paper labels. These were regarded as rather temporary; if one were inclined to keep such a trivial book as a novel, it could be rebound in leather or half leather and marbled boards. The novels of Jane Austen and Walter Scott appeared in this form in their first editions. Today, copies of these novels “in the original boards” bring a premium of several times the cost of a copy in contemporary half morocco.

Beginning in the 1830’s, publishers brought out new novels in cloth bindings, decorated with stamped lettering and decoration, often colored, sometimes gilt. The three volume format became *de rigueur*, and continued to be fashionable almost until the end of the century. This style of publication was accompanied by the rise of the “lending libraries”, private libraries from which the newest novels could be rented, for a reasonably small fee. The largest of these companies were “Mudie’s Select Library” and the firm of W.H. Smith & Co. W.H. Smith continues and prospers to this day, although primarily as a book seller, not a rental agency. In

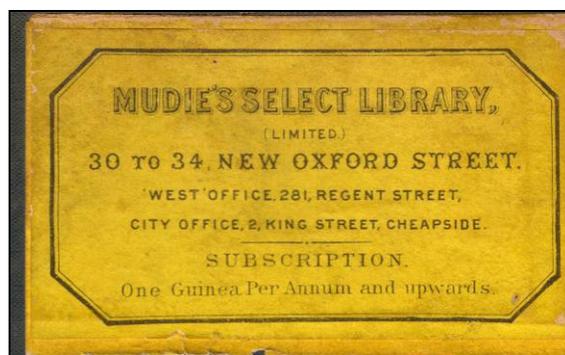
their heyday, in the latter part of the 19th century, however, they rented the books. Most upper middle class families with any pretensions whatsoever would have a subscription to Mudie's or to Smith's. Subscriptions were not cheap, starting at a guinea a year – a little more than £1, when that was a very comfortable weekly wage for a skilled workman. However, for this subscribers could select one of the latest, just-out novels, and have a volume mailed to their homes, at any location in England. The efficient postal system of that time usually assured delivery within one day. And here was another economic driver for the three-decker novel system: the libraries could keep one novel going among three customers. The customers felt they were getting a bargain. Even if it took a week or so for everybody in the household who cared to read the one volume, a family could go through considerably more than a dozen novels in the course of a year, all for about a pound. The outright purchase cost of one of these novels was itself about £1, so both vendor and clients were satisfied. Indeed, it became rather unusual for private individuals to buy the novels outright. One comic writer of the period allowed that he knew only one person of his acquaintance who had ever actually bought such a novel, cash money. But, "this was a young man who presented the thing as a gift to his fiancée, in an outrageous attempt to make an impression."

With the exception of a few of the most popular novelists, this system became the most common way to publish new fiction in book form in the middle decades of 19th century England. Dickens, Thackeray, and a few others of the most-read writers commonly published their novels in monthly serial form: the "parts" issues that are still sought by collectors. The total cost of buying a novel in parts was about the equivalent of buying a 3-decker. However, the parts cost would be spread out over the twenty months or more of the publication period, as the eager readers went down to the corner store to buy each month's paper-backed issue of *Pickwick* or *Vanity Fair*. With the pain of purchase thus spread out over two years or so, many sets of the parts ended up in private ownership. After the last number was published, the owner could have the parts bound, either by his own binder or the publisher would offer a cloth binding. These would usually be bound in only one or two volumes. Because of this system, only two novels of Dickens and only two of Thackeray's, for example, first appeared as 3-deckers – all their other long novels first appeared in parts.

With the 3-decker system, most of the output of the publishers went to the libraries. The printings were small, typically 500 to 1,000 copies. Obviously, many of the copies were read to death. But used copies of older novels were available for sale at Mudie's or Smith's emporia, at a fraction of the published price, and so some number ended up in private hands. Mudie's, at least, maintained a book bindery, where they rebound some of their 3-deckers in respectable half leather and cloth-covered or marbled boards. My copy of Trollope's *The Duke's Children* is one such rebind. Each of the three volumes is bound in half calf, with red and green

leather titling pieces, and gilt decoration, quite handsome, actually. The only sign of their lending library experience is a small printed binder's notice at the bottom of the reverse of the front free endpaper of each volume, simply stating, "Bound by Mudie". There is a handwritten gift inscription at the top of the title page, "Janie S. Vesey, from her loving Mother". I like to think that Janie's mom finally bought her a copy of one of her favorite novels, one that she had first read from the family Mudie's subscription. Rebound it may be, but this attractive binding tells its own story, and it is one of the rarer Trollope first editions. Published when Trollope's popularity had declined, this first edition is difficult to obtain in any condition now.

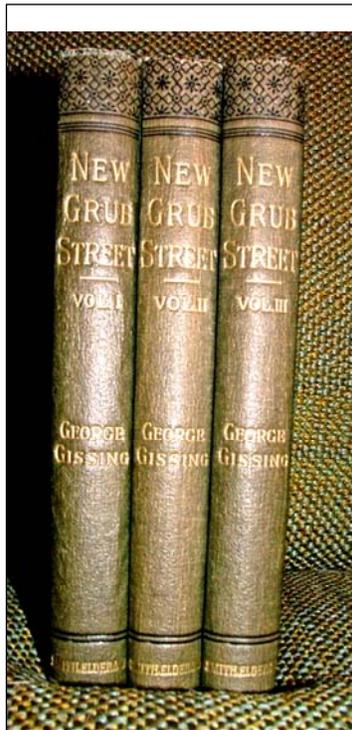
Even if not rebound, a 3-decker that has passed through the lending libraries is seldom unscathed. In addition to general wear and tear to the cloth binding, the libraries would prominently label the volumes. W.H. Smith would often use a good-sized embossing tool, affixing their blind stamp right on the title page of each volume. Mudie's standard practice was to glue large bright yellow labels onto the front covers of their books. The figure below shows one of these labels, still remaining intact on my copy of Walter Pater's *Imaginary Portraits* (1887). This book is *not* a 3-decker. On those, during their migrations through the buyings and sellings of the antiquarian book trade, the labels tend to have been removed in the course of attempts made to put some lipstick on a poor piggy. While I regard the labels as evidence of a fascinating chapter in the history of the book, they were scorned during most of the time since publication, being abhorred almost as much as evidence of public library ownership is in a modern first edition. But the labels are big, about 3³/₄ x 2¹/₄ inches. After removal, despite all efforts of "restorers" to remove the traces, the underlying cloth is typically brighter, and the sheen of the material is different. If the label location is not immediately obvious, as it usually is, tilting the volume to the light reveals its ghost outline. It is in the nature of the beast that most 3-decker copies in original cloth today bear such tell-tale traces; many of mine certainly do.



Novels first published in 3-decker form were not commonly reprinted this way. If the novel became popular enough to merit reprinting, this usually took the form of a later edition in a single volume, selling for a small fraction of the 3-decker cost. Occasionally, when the novel was a hit, and

there was great demand from the libraries for a particularly popular book, the novel would be re-issued in the original 3-decker form. When done, this was always within a year or so of the original printing, and, again, many of the additional copies would be taken up by the lending libraries. Most often, these are really reissues of the original printing, not reprints, sometimes without any printing changes at all. Nevertheless, they are usually, (and incorrectly from the collector's viewpoint), identified on the title page as "2nd Edition", etc, or as "New Edition". In the normal course of events, a larger fraction of these issues would be bought by individuals, and escape the library markings. So it is that some of my finest 3-deckers in the original publisher's cloth are such 2nd issues. These include some rather well-known books: Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1861), Collins' *The Woman in White* (also, 1861), and Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891). Each of these is in the identical binding to the 1st issues, and in very good or fine condition, with no traces of library markings, a state that is almost unobtainable for 1st issues this late in the game (zillionaires excluded, I guess). The *New Grub Street* (shown below) is worth a few additional remarks.

This famous novel was published quite late in the 3-decker era, and is the masterpiece of George Gissing, as unhappy a writer as ever starving artist was. "Grub Street" as defined by Samuel Johnson, was the name of a street populated by hack writers, and, hence, "any mean production is called *grub-street*". The novel describes the struggles of writers as they attempt to make a living in the increasingly competitive and commercialized world of 19th century literary London. The protagonist is a desperately struggling novelist who refuses to compromise his artistic principles to satisfy the mass demands for sensational fiction; he of course dies young, an embittered man. His pretty widow marries a prosperous competitor, who has accepted the whorish conditions necessary for success in the literary world. There are strongly autobiographical aspects of the novel. Among the many indictments in the book, Gissing rails against the 3-decker system, calling it "A triple-headed monster, sucking the blood of English novelists." Ironically, this is the only one of Gissing's several 3-deckers that became popular enough to be reprinted in the original 3-volume form. In his diary for May 23, 1891, he notes "See it announced in the *Athenaeum* that a 2nd 3-vol. edition of *New Grub Street* is just published. The first time I have achieved this."



Poor Gissing. Even the relative success of *New Grub Street* did not pull him out of his impoverished existence. He had already sold all rights to the novel outright, so the reprinting brought him no further income. Four days after the diary entry just quoted, he was toiling away on his next 3-decker. We read in the entry for May 27:

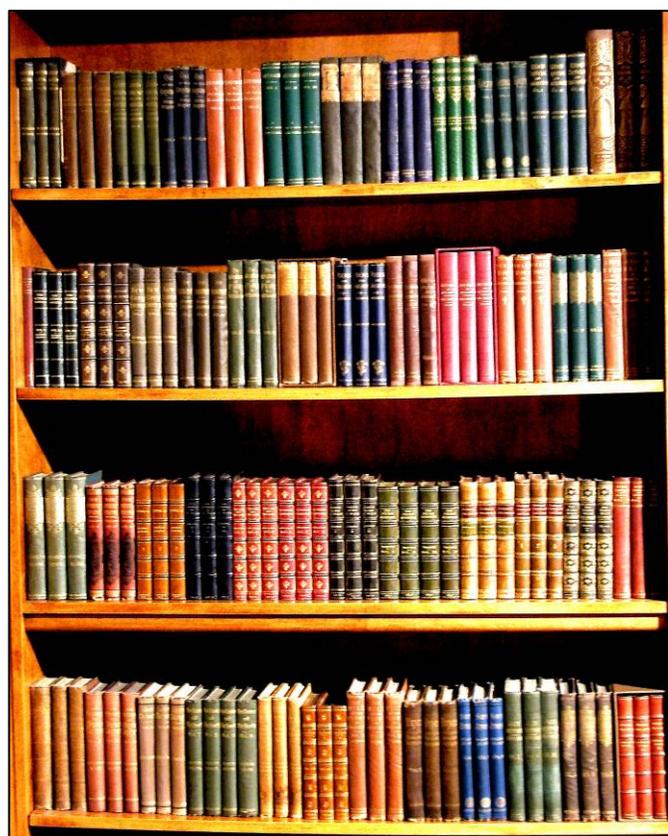
"Wrote 2½ pp. Am past the middle of Vol. II. ... Ordered Hardy's Two on a Tower, which I want to reread. Did it with a sense of extravagance, - the cost being 1/8 [about 40¢ in American money of the time for this 1-vol. reprint]. Look at my position, with a novel succeeding as New Grub Street has done. I cannot subscribe to a library, I can only just afford the necessary food from day to day; and have to toil in fear of finishing my money before another book is ready. This is monstrously unjust. Who of the public would believe that I am still in such poverty?"

By the way, I recommend Gissing's diary as well as his books. The diary has been published under the title of *London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England*, a somewhat obscure title chosen by Pierre Coustillas, the distinguished Gissing scholar who edited it. However, I also recommend the reader be in an upscale mood before undertaking the diary – perhaps after getting a big tax refund, or after your dream girl says yes, or after any other joy-bringing happening in life. When I first began to read it, I was in a depressed mood, and ended it feeling positively suicidal.

Within a few years of the publication of *New Grub Street*, the 3-decker era was over. The reasons were, again, economic. The interval between the three-decker publication and the publication of cheap one-volume editions began to be ever shorter. Folks could wait for this, rather than buying a used 3-decker from Mudie; sort of the equivalent of our modern-day "waiting for the paperback to come out." Then, too, the number of free public libraries that offered novels increased steadily in England after the 1850 Libraries Act was passed. Mudie's was getting clogged with used 3-deckers for sale, piling up. When Mudie's son Arthur took over the business, he announced (1894) that the company would cease dealing with any publisher who 1) didn't drastically reduce the cost of a 3-decker, and, 2) published any cheaper edition in less than a year from the publication of the 3-decker. Mudie's near-monopolistic position in controlling the market was revealed. In 1894, 184 3-deckers had appeared; in 1895, 52; by 1897, only 4. The authors and the reading public rejoiced; only the book publishers regretted this squeeze play.

What of collecting 3-deckers today? They were never, with a few exceptions, extremely common books, and most can fittingly be called scarce now. I have tried to obtain them over my collecting career, and not just because they are the form taken by many important first editions in English literature. The nineteenth century equivalent of today's video rentals they may be, but, en masse, they can present a spectacular appearance on the shelves – at least, to me. The illustration below shows some of the present collection. As in most aspects of book collecting, you can make your own rules. I have tried to adhere to a few principles here. A cardinal one is to collect only the books and authors that appeal to me – I don't collect 3-deckers for the sake of them *being*

3-deckers. So, following this preference, I have quite a few of Trollope, Eliot, Charlotte Bronte, Gissing, Collins, Reade, etc. in this form. Secondly, when presented with a choice between a copy in shabby original cloth that looks like you could catch something from it, and a copy in contemporary half leather, I go for the sound rebind. I even extend this. Many collectors of 19th century novels, particularly in the early decades of the 20th century, decided to have their favorites rather gloriously rebound – the full treatment, complete morocco, gilt extra. This was before the emphasis began on original, “as-published” condition being the only fit state for the serious collector. Sometimes, these wonderful rebinds, by the great trade binders, such as Riviere, Zaehnsdorf, Birdsall, etc., have the original cloth covers bound in at the end, in surprisingly bright condition. Testimony to the tastes of an earlier age, this procedure greatly reduced the market value of the books compared to what they would be worth if they had just taken the books and put them in a fancy morocco box. My Hardy, *The Return of the Native*, is one such. It has a full crushed morocco binding, but, in each volume, are nice condition cloth covers and spines from the original published state. Actually, it makes a book like this affordable for the likes of me and it sure looks purty. And, after all, we collect books to please ourselves.



Musings ...

Joe Perko

On the 2007 FABS Book Tour

The 2007 Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies (FABS) Book Tour and Symposium was held in Washington, DC from October 10th to October 13th and was hosted by the Washington Rare Book Group.

This was the first time that I attended one of these events. What the “tour” really consists of is primarily visits to various libraries, bookshops and book-related venues. It not only included public institutions’ libraries (e.g., the Library of Congress, libraries of constituent museums of the Smithsonian system) but it also included private libraries ranging from The Folger Library to personal collections of individual members of the Washington Rare Book Group. These individuals graciously opened their homes so that those of us on the tour could see members’ collections in place.

To give a flavor of the day-to-day richness of the tour, I’d first like to say that the tour provided both scheduled events for the entire group – which was about 80 attendees – as well as optional and break-out visits so that we had a choice to see only certain departments within libraries. Had this winnowing not been done and had everyone gone to all the libraries, fully another whole day or two would have been needed to see everything.

For example, on Wednesday afternoon there were visits to the Georgetown University Library’s Special Collections or, as an alternative, to a specialty bookseller, Quill & Brush, in Dickerson, Maryland, which specializes in first editions of American and English literature.

I opted to see the Georgetown library and was rewarded with seeing a selection of works from both the University’s collection and the personal collection of the manuscripts librarian, Nicholas Scheetz.

As might be expected, the breath and depth of the University’s special collection was impressive. However, of all the items that were exhibited to us, what caught my eye was the day journal of Richard Helms. As many will recall, Mr. Helms was Director of Central Intelligence and head of the CIA from 1966 to 1973. Mr. Scheetz explained that Mrs. Helms had bequeathed her husband’s archives to Georgetown which has a special collection of intelligence-related material that is second in size only to the CIA itself. The material related to Mr. Helms was accepted only after being vetted by the agency and we got to see the most prominent item – Mr. Helms’ day journal (or appointment book.)

Turning to the personal items Mr. Scheetz brought in, what caught my eye were copies of the first four English editions of the Persian poem, the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. These were translations by Edward Fitzgerald in the late 19th century. Mr. Scheetz had a number of other items related to this work including what he termed is the first American edition,

i.e., one brought out by the Grolier Club. However, and this was particularly interesting to me and I would think to any Aldine, Mr. Scheetz said that his sleuthing found that the real first American edition was one published here in Columbus, Ohio. To date, he has not found a copy of this edition. So, if any Aldus member happens to have one, I'm sure it would be of interest to Mr. Scheetz.



Thursday was a full day with the morning spent at the Rosenwald Room of the Library of Congress. The room is named after its donor, Lessing J. Rosenwald, who was Chairman of the Board of Sears, Roebuck and Company from 1932 to 1939. Upon his retirement, he devoted the rest of his life to his book collection and left his books to the Library of Congress.

To illustrate the number of items we saw, the staff of the Rare Book and Special Collections Division prepared a thirty-one page bibliography of items from the Rosenwald Collection. The works span the history of text from manuscripts to incunabula to early printed works through modern times as Mr. Rosenwald collected until he died in 1979.

As impressive as the "rare books" Mr. Rosenwald collected are, and their rarity is attested to by being kept in a vault below ground and made available only to scholars or to groups such as the FABS tour, what struck me as equally impressive was the reference collection of works that deal with the underlying work as a whole or they may deal with one aspect or topic within the underlying work. And, for each rare book, from what I saw, it was not uncommon to see many, many reference books.

This reference collection is housed in a library in the shape of a huge oval, perhaps seventy to eighty feet long and twenty to thirty feet wide! There are shelves with glass doors from floor to ceiling – a ceiling with a height of around fifteen to eighteen feet! This room, per the librarian who guided us through this reference room, replicated the library in Mr. Rosenwald's home in Jenkinville, PA, and was built after the Library of Congress acquired the works in 1979.

After viewing the Rosenwald collection, we had break-out visits to various special divisions of the Library of Congress. These divisions were the prints and photographs division, the geography and map division, the conservation laboratories and the Great Hall. Among my interests are geography so I went on the geography and maps tour.

This collection is housed underground and covers some two acres of space! As the collection is rapidly expanding, part of it is being moved off-site to an archive with provision made to make an item available to a patron within a 24-hour time span.

What I found interesting is that this collection totals some six million items but only a small fraction of those items are formally catalogued. A tour member from Seattle pointed out that he's volunteering at the University of Washington's

library helping catalog a huge backlog of uncatalogued items they have.

Of the items here that I found to be fascinating were the collection of Sanborn Insurance Maps. This is a collection of maps that were published for over 100 years and contained information about properties in some 12,000 cities and towns. These maps went block-by-block and included information of what kind of structure was on a parcel of property along with what it was constructed of and what fire hydrants were in the area. From these maps – which were then sold to insurance companies – underwriters would then assess risk and determine the premium to be charged the customer seeking insurance for his or her property. At present, these maps are being used by homeowners who are doing a genealogy of their homes!

Other items in this collection of interest to me were portolan maps, Ptolemaic atlases (including one that was owned by the Renaissance humanist, Pico della Mirandola), an atlas whose pages were bound (into the atlas) by pages of the medieval theologian Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, the first atlas of China whose map-pages were silk, and a collection of monastic records for one monastery that consisted of the initial royal charter of the land grant along with maps of the land showing where the monastic buildings stood and of the fields some of which were worked by monks and others rented out to tenants. For the latter, there were three centuries of rent rolls!

The afternoon took us to The Folger Shakespeare Library, a world-renown research library devoted to the advanced study of the early modern period. The donor, Mr. Folger, was the chairman of the board of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil of New York. Without children, he and his wife were avid collectors of Shakespearean materials for 50 years. They left their collection and built the library in Washington as a gift to the nation.

We were greeted by the Librarian, Richard Kuhta, who then spoke on a significant holding of The Folger, *The Trevelyon Miscellany* of 1608. This is a hand drawn and lettered book created by the skilled scribe and patternmaker Thomas Trevelyon. This book is literally an encyclopedia of daily life and thought in Shakespeare's England and includes words and images from English and European woodcuts, engravings, broadsides, almanacs, emblem books and the Bible. The book weighs over 17 pounds.

Currently, in celebration of the library's 75th anniversary, a facsimile limited edition of 648 pages with 594 color illustrations has been prepared and is being sold to collectors.

Subsequently, The Folger purchased the collection of Sir Robert Leicester Harmsworth, which had more than 8,000 rare books that were printed in England between 1475 and 1640. Together with later acquisitions of Continental material, the Harmsworth purchase expanded the Folger's focus beyond Shakespeare studies to include virtually all aspects of the early modern world. The Harmsworth collection ex-

cluded literature but when combined with the original collection of the Folgers, this core of rare works is what makes the library the premier research center it is. The centerpiece of its collection is a group of 79 of the approximately 240 surviving copies of Shakespeare's 1623 First Folio.

The tour group also got to visit the library's conservation department, its reading room for visiting scholars and the Great Hall exhibitions. To close our visit there, the Librarian hosted afternoon tea.



Friday morning had the tour participants split up with half going to visit the U.S. Naval Observatory's library and half going to visit the Library and Print Room at the National Gallery of Art. I opted for a visit to the Naval Observatory.

The library exists as a place to house works dealing with aids to navigation. Here many celestial atlases were on display and were available for individual inspection. Included in the works we saw was the library's oldest title, the *Poeticon Astronomicon* by Hyginus of 1482.

Friday afternoon offered participants a choice of visiting the libraries at the Freer Gallery of Art and the Holocaust Museum or of visiting the Cullman Library of Natural History and the library of the National Air and Space Museum. There was also a choice of visiting the White House which was a block from the hotel where we stayed.



Saturday morning was devoted to the tour's Symposium where various book-related talks were given by four prominent librarians and collectors. After lunch we visited the home-libraries in the District and in Maryland of members of the Washington Rare Book Group.

The highlight of this day was the closing dinner at The Cosmos Club on Embassy Row. This club is an old-line Washington Club whose members are all prominent leaders in their individual fields. What struck me is just how prominent these members were. This was borne out in that on one wall there was a long row of full pages of U.S. postage stamps. This row was headed by a sign proclaiming "Members of The Cosmos Club who have been honored with a postage stamp." Then, on another wall was another lengthy row – this time of 12 x 15 photographs. The inscription above this row read "Members of The Cosmos who have been honored by a Nobel Prize."

What more can be said?



Sunday was an optional extension day as the tour had officially ended with Saturday's closing dinner. The hosts had arranged for a morning visit to the library of the Society of the Cincinnati. The Society is named for the Roman citizen-soldier hero, Cincinnatus, who led Rome to victory in war but gave up power and position to return to his home and plow. This Society was organized after the Revolutionary War as a hereditary organization limited in membership to

American and French officers who served in the Revolution. Its first president was George Washington, who, it was believed, embodied the virtues of Cincinnatus. The aim of the Society is to preserve the ideals of the Revolution. Present membership is limited to descendants of Revolutionary War officers and currently there are about 3,500 members including about 300 French descendants.

The Society is housed in Anderson House which, coincidentally, is across the street from The Cosmos Club. Among the items our participants saw were works of art devoted to war, military documents from the time of the Revolution, the archives of the Society of the Cincinnati, maps, and personal property of Larz and Isabel Anderson who donated their winter residence as a permanent home for the Society in 1939.

The afternoon took us to Mount Vernon for a visit to the Washington Research Library along with a visit to the museum and home of the first president. There were many lunches and dinners included. While the dinner at The Cosmos Club was the most memorable, the meals at other locations were all pleasant.



I am sure that the items I talked about would not necessarily interest everyone. But, they were of interest to me. There were other items that would be of interest to others that did not have particular meaning for me. The point is: there really was something for everyone on a book tour. The Washington Rare Book Group is to be commended for the fine tour they put together. And, it is with a tinge of envy that I say "how I wish their libraries were closer and more available for more frequent visits."

Overall, a lot was packed into the five day tour. As a vacation, the opportunity to see the libraries, their collections, and representative works from those collections was wonderful experience. And, meeting fellow bibliophiles from throughout the country was a special dividend of this tour.



Yet Another Holiday Dinner Success at La Scala

The 2007 Holiday Dinner found 50 Aldus Society members and guests at *La Scala* for an evening of fun and friendship. At this year's event we held our second silent book auction to benefit Aldus Society programming. We had a number of books of interest to book lovers, and the bidding was brisk. We collected a total of \$1,127 for our program coffers, which represented an increase of approximately 25% over last year's inaugural event.

Mark your calendars for next December 8th for another return to *La Scala*, and plan on bringing some books to donate, some money to buy others ... and an appetite!



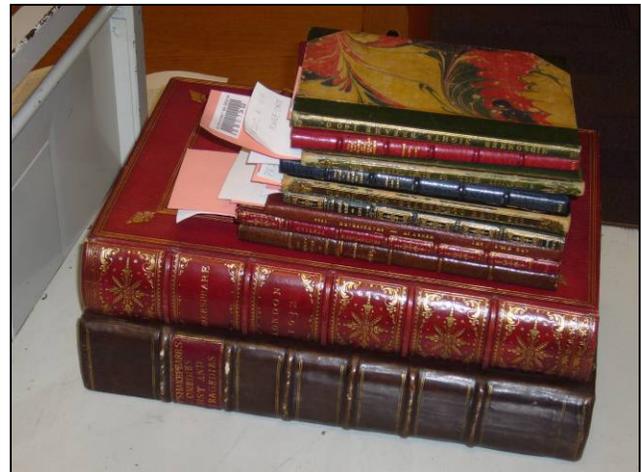
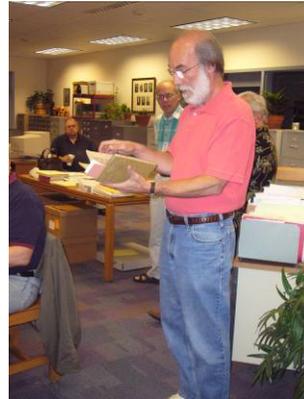
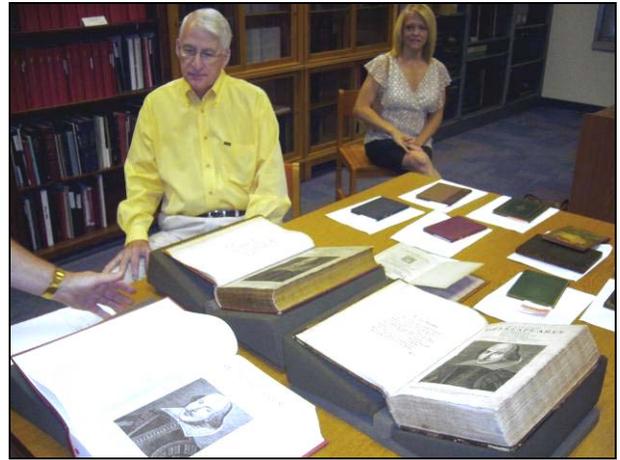
Touching Treasures: A First Saturday Review

As most members know, our First Saturday programs are becoming more popular with each session. First Saturday events are informal hands-on sessions, wherein members are invited to the OSU Rare Books and Manuscripts Library to view and discuss several books selected from the OSU collection, and are designed to provide attendees with an opportunity to explore books in relative depth with commentary by a subject specialist.

2007's events included a January exploration of artists' books, an Ohio-centered exploration of the work of Louis Bromfield and Dawn Powell in February, a March introduction to OSU's Avant Writing Collections, an April look at important authors' first books, a May review of some of the same authors' last books, a July consideration of everything Chaucer, a visit with Shakespeare in August, an autumnal view of fine bindings in October, and a December look at early poetry.

The events are held at the OSU Rare Book and Manuscripts Library's temporary location at 2700 Kenny Road. The events begin at 10:00 am. For directions, go to:

<http://library.osu.edu/sites/rarebooks/location.php>





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Edges Lightly Insect Stained

Genie Hoster

You can't make this stuff up. Here's another batch of book descriptions that have recently appeared in internet used book listings, and are reproduced here exactly as they appear on the web, spellings, punctuation, and all!

Book Condition: Edges lightly insect stained.

Book Condition: "flypaper spotted"

Book Condition: "Brown clot over boards..."

Book Description: "Paperback. Book Condition: Good. FREE SHIPPING on this item! Some wear on book from reading, spine creases, wear on binding and pages, we guarantee all purchases and ship all items via USPS mail. 368 pages. PRICE \$10004.26"

Book Description: "Book is in a poor condition, front cover to title page is barely hanging on, the book's spine is stiff there are 311 pgs is not a shelfable book. it is barely loose enough to read due to the stiff spine, but it is complete and whoever is its next reader may be its last."

Book Condition: "Very Good. Soft Cover. Very Good. Slight water/moisture 'warp', else Fine."

Book Condition: "Boards lightly scuffed and edgeworn with small dampstain to front panel"

From an otherwise quite detailed and conscientious listing:

"Book Condition: Very Good."

The other typo in that particular description noted that there were,

No "remainder marks."

I would like to think that "remainder" marks are those that maim the book,

Book Description: "A few small lacey spots where something has nipped on side pg edges..."

Book Description: "minor wave on block foredge, otherwise leaves clean."

Thank goodness it wasn't a tsunami, imagine the seaweed...

Book Description: "pictures have been clopped out of page 97..."

Book Description: pocket, 1959. Soft cover. Book Condition: Fair. No Jacket. 2nd Edition. novel bio of major yellowstone kelly (little big manto soux), cover photo of clit waler of heyenne tv series and kooki of 77 sunst strip.

Huh?

Book Description: "Happy Birthday message written inside..."

Book Description: "book shop stock closing down sale... we have every author available including a lot of signed copies of books including one called Gastapo and autographed by adolf hitler..."

Book Description: Hard Cover. Book Condition: Fine. Dust Jacket Condition: Fine. 1st English Edition. Spine is scraped at top and bumped at bottom. Dust jacket has small tears at top of spine.

Fine, eh???

