

ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSELLERS' ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER



WINTER 2024  
ISSUE 418

news - events - articles - minutes



## A letter from the ABA President

# *Deborah Coltham*

Welcome to the first ABA newsletter of 2024. Having recently sent out lengthy missives both before Christmas, and then accompanying the annual subs notification, I will try and keep this relatively brief!

In what will no doubt be another busy year for the Association, we have plenty to look forward to. At the end of February all members will once again be invited to exhibit in the complimentary Firsts Online fair, with another winter edition planned for the end of the year. Attracting a sizeable audience from America, as well as a steady flow of European visitors, these virtual fairs continue to provide dealers with a convenient online platform to reach a global audience. Almost all who replied to the post-fair survey felt that they had met potential new customers, and median sales of £2,000 were reported, and with an average of £3,649. My thanks to Tom Lintern-Mole and his committee for continuing to oversee and manage these so efficiently.

We then look forward to the annual return to the Edinburgh Book Fair. At the time of writing, the plan is for the fair to be preceded by the AGM – although this is still to be finalised. It has been several years since the AGM was last held anywhere other than London, and it is my sincere wish that we can have a change of venue, making it more accessible (in theory) for those north of the Watford Gap!



Deborah at Chelsea Rare Book Fair, November 2023

Firsts London, this year scheduled for May 16-19, is now firmly established in the international calendar, with institutions, bibliophile societies and private collectors alike travelling from around the world. Once again timed to avoid clashing with bank holidays and half-terms, all being well, we will continue to see increasing footfall and healthy sales. The central location is proving beneficial in terms of attracting visitors, thanks in part to strong advertising campaigns, and active social medial strategies. Fair attendance in May increased by 31%. The split-level arrangement is not without its critics we know, but the fair committee are continuing to work hard on improving signage and flow through the fair, and to address the loading issues. It does mean, however, that there is a stand price to suit all, and the fair continues to offer the cheapest half-stands including a glass case at a summer fair. We would be hard-pressed to find a better, more centrally

located venue. Pom Harrington as Chair, and his excellent Firsts London committee, continue to work hard to ensure that the fair remains one of the most pre-eminent in the international calendar.

We are delighted that two new fairs have been added to the ABA calendar. The Bath fair will be held at the Bath Pavilion between July 26-27 and will be another joint venture held in conjunction with the PBFA. Whilst the two organisations will continue to 'sing to their own tune' (as they should do), positive collaborations such as the fairs in Edinburgh and now Bath can only be of benefit to the trade as a whole, and are to be celebrated. For those seeking new ventures further afield, Firsts Hong Kong will open 6-8 December 2024 at the Hong Kong Maritime Museum. Obviously two very different fairs, but hopefully offering new opportunities to suit all.

Though they have a very hard act to follow, may I also remind you about the ILAB Congress in Amsterdam in October (14-17). I know that the Dutch Antiquarian Booksellers Association and ILAB are working very hard on the programme, and I have no doubt that it will be a wonderful event in what is such a renowned centre for literature, art, and book culture.

Many thanks to all who responded to the Survey that was sent out before Christmas. In response, the Office are currently working on plans to host online seminars or question and answer sessions providing advice and guidance on topics such as social media, photography, and the always-thorny issue of

export and import.

The Friends of the ABA is another positive initiative. We have a number of new members, and are continuing to add to our programme of events for 2024. Membership packs will be available at all future fairs, and so I feel confident numbers will steadily rise.

It was lovely to be able to briefly attend YABS in November, even though no longer on the faculty. Once again sold out and with a waiting list, I don't think it is an exaggeration to say that the creation of YABS has been the single most influential and ground-breaking book trade initiative to have started over the last 50 years. Drawing inspiration from CABS, it took incredible drive, determination, not to mention hard physical work and graft, to turn what was the seed of an idea into reality. The brain-child of Anthony Smithson, Alice Lavery and Jonathan Kearns, it has grown and expanded exponentially from 2014 and is now an internationally recognised seminar which is the envy of many Associations, and an inspiration to all. Now under the umbrella of the ABA Educational Trust and Riley Grant, 2024 will see a few changes, due to personal circumstances and logistical considerations. Many, many thanks to Anthony, Alice and Jonathan for all that they have done.

YABS now have an alumni of some 300 students, and one of the planned initiatives for the coming year is to create an early career booksellers network – hopefully in collaboration with the PBFA – and which will provide a forum for those who are not yet members of associations.

We are an active and vibrant association. Our membership numbers and retention are strong, with a steady stream of new enquiries and applications. Thanks to YABS the UK trade as a whole has a wealth of new booksellers entering the trade, which will translate into new ABA members in the not-too-distant future. Our physical fairs are well supported, and the virtual fairs have a useful place in the calendar. Our involvement with the Book Collecting Seminar Series both at the Warburg and the IES, the London Rare Book School, the Book Trade History Conference, and with CILIP, means that we are maintaining good links with libraries and Institutions around the UK. Thanks to all of those who are involved in the running of these – too many to name, but vital and much appreciated work.

None of this would be possible with our ABA office. Many thanks as always to Riley and Rachel for their hard work. As the survey highlighted, their efforts are much appreciated. Thanks to, must go to the ABA Council and all of the committees. There is a lot of work going on, much of it behind the scenes. May I wish you all a very happy and prosperous 2024.

*“We are an active and vibrant association. Our membership numbers and retention are strong, with a steady stream of new enquiries and applications. Thanks to YABS the UK trade as a whole has a wealth of new booksellers entering the trade, which will translate into new ABA members in the not-too-distant future.”*

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## The Antiquarian Booksellers' Association



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## ABA Office

Company Secretary	Riley Grant
Marketing Manager	Rachel Chanter

21 John Street, London WC1N 2BF  
020 7439 3114  
admin@aba.org.uk  
Follow us @abararebooks | @firstslondon



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## 50 Years a Bookseller

# Cooper Hay

It was with great pleasure that the ABA 'Fifty Years a Bookseller' pin was presented to Cooper Hay, of Cooper Hay Rare Books, Glasgow, at the Chelsea Book Fair in November 2023.

Speaking of Cooper's career, ABA President Deborah Coltham said: 'Cooper joined the famous firm of John Smith & Son at 57 St Vincent Street Glasgow in 1972, initially working in the general section, before later moving into the antiquarian department (after a brief interim period working for himself). He opened his own shop on Bath Street at the Antiques Galleries in 1985. According to

Jolyon Hudson, Cooper had stylishly fitted out a basement room with shelves and glass fronted cases lined with marbled paper. Rumour has it that on the opening night he sold enough stock to meet his first year's budget! Establishing early on the importance of building good customer relationships, Cooper's shop soon became the go to destination for any discerning customer, with a varied clientele – including the odd celebrity such as Johnny Cash.

Not confined to bookselling, Cooper also moved into publishing, and in 1991 travelled to Yugoslavia to have a facsimile produced of Mackintosh's House for an Art Lover, where he had found a suitable printer. Unwittingly caught up at the start of the Yugoslavian War, Cooper had a fairly hair-raising escape, though had five minutes of fame appearing on BBC's Good Morning Scotland to give a first-hand account of the developing conflict. Fortunately, he escaped unharmed, and his remaining career has been less action-packed (as far as we are aware)! Always fastidious in buying high quality books, with an uncanny eye for gems, he remains at the forefront of the trade – as the swarm of dealers who greeted his arrival to set up his stand at Chelsea, bears testament to! Many congratulations on your 50 years as a bookseller, and here's to many more!



## Jason Burley *Camden Lock Books*

### Specialisms:

Miniature books, antiquarian books, modern first editions

[camdenlockbooks.com](http://camdenlockbooks.com)

Tel: +44 779 1962 785

E: [jason@camdenlockbooks.co.uk](mailto:jason@camdenlockbooks.co.uk)

127 Dynevor Road,  
London,  
N16 0DA



## Meet our *New Members*

**W**elcome to the ABA!  
Can you introduce  
us to your business in a  
nutshell?

Miniature books are my primary focus and I currently have around a thousand examples of either sets or individual miniature volumes for sale. Most of them are at least one hundred years old and have been catalogued, but are awaiting photographs and enhanced descriptions before I manage to promote them on Instagram, and at the ABA alongside other online marketing platforms. Among the rare and desirable items on offer are miniature libraries, fine microscopic printings and beautifully bound miniature volumes.

I also retain a small and eclectic stock of larger collectable books that cover a broad cross-section of subject matter from antiquarian books to modern first editions. My debut ABA book fair will be in May at

Firsts London.

### **What was your route into the book trade?**

On July 9th 1979 my first and only book-trade job was at Francis Edwards of 83 Marylebone High Street as a Trainee Bookdealer on a salary of £3,000 a year! When the business was subsequently bought from Alan Mitchell by Pharos Books in 1982 and the shop became briefly known as Read's, I was amongst those bookdealers sadly made redundant. After serving my time as a self-employed West-End book runner (also selling my stock of mainly travel books from my stall every Saturday at an indoor antique market at Portobello Road), I opened my first second-hand book shop premises forty years ago in 1984, above the old music venue 'Dingwalls' in Camden Lock on a shoestring with bootstrap funding.

In inner London, ever since

that date and over the ensuing forty years, I have had four book shop premises in Camden, one in Southwark, one in Islington and now Burley Fisher Books at 400 Kingsland Road, Haggerston, Hackney (co-founded with Sam Fisher) selling old books (since 2002, I also retailed new books). Burley Fisher was awarded the accolade of the Best London Independent Bookshop both in 2021 and 2022 by the Booksellers Association.

***If you had to choose just one, what would you say your key specialism is, and what drew you to it?***

I specialise in miniature books with a maximum dimension of less than ten centimetres or four inches. Louis Bondy's book shop in Bloomsbury at 16 Little Russell Street was my very first encounter with miniature books and I remember feeling daunted by their arcane nature. Shortly after that visit, I successfully bid for my first Ellen Terry set of miniature Shakespeare in their original revolving bookcase. Thankfully, when my regular stand at the monthly two-day PBFA Hotel Russell London Book fair happened to be right next to Michael Garbett's stand, he swiftly further demystified bijou books, and I became inspired to build up a fledgling miniature book trade from small cabinets in my bookshops. Miniature books demand less display space for collectors but hold even more fascination for just being so tiny and such extraordinary technical accomplishments; they are so much lighter and smaller to handle, pack up, post,



receive through letter-boxes and transport to and from book fairs too.

***Are you a collector yourself, and if so, what do you collect?***

I am not a proper collector myself — every book will have its price. But I do currently keep hold of a selection of first editions of my favourite modern writers — Virginia Woolf, Louis-Ferdinand Celine (loving his novels and loathing his antisemitism), Paul Bowles, Ben Traven and Samuel Beckett. Neither do I seem to ever sell any of the dozens of autobiographical books about the book-trade written by booksellers. The hoard of modern fiction, that I optimistically hoped to re-read one day, is now gradually being thinned out, with a fair degree of reluctance. I do vigorously collect books up, but, paradoxically, I am not a collector.



***Do you have a favourite item currently in stock?***

There is a trap that I fall headlong into: my most recently purchased book is my favourite item in stock. I wonder if that is a weakness of character I need to keep to myself? Earlier today, I unpackaged a part-set of eleven miniature Ellen Terry editions of Shakespeare published in Glasgow by David Bryce; they are all bound in red silk with faded gilt spines and, of all the multiple binding variations that exist, I have never seen a single example of this silk binding (and they are not referred to in Michael Garbett's bibliographical guide to the miniature books of David Bryce); an extremely academic point of interest, admittedly (but I am intrigued by them).

Even more recently purchased is a French miniature almanac and notebook published by Le Fuel. It is a flamboyantly elaborate binding and was almost certainly retailed in Paris at the Palais-Royal, beautifully crafted in Mother-of-Pearl & ormolu gilt bronze, with "Souvenir" engraved on front panel. Lined with cream silk endpapers and dated 1820 - the year Louis XVIII was King of France, Napoleon Bonaparte was in exile on St. Helena, and there was a plot to overthrow the Bourbon monarchy. I recently sold a similar miniature book that was originally bought by a Lady-in-waiting to Caroline of Brunswick, Princess of Wales - expensive and luxurious gems of books even two hundred years ago.

***Encouraging new blood in the trade is important, but it's a tough time to set up a business. What would be your advice for people who want to begin dealing rare books?***

My bookshop business partner and five staff are all about ten years younger than my oldest child but I have quietly encouraged them to embrace and engage with the book trade by passing on some key principles and by urging them to delve into what catalogues and reference books are available online, at book fairs and in the books brought in by customers for sale. They have had some very successful book house clearances. My initial advice, for what it may be worth, is to become familiar with one or more book dealers, talking to them and to their staff; then I recommend regularly scouring and researching the internet on a relatively narrow range of rare books; a bit of book-running would be a tentative first step into selling books and gauging what is in demand. Most of the people I have met who went into the book trade are entrepreneurs and have a dogged determination and passion for what they do. I enjoy and feel flattered to be asked to counsel anyone who hopes to join the book trade but doubt my time or advice is specifically of value other than providing encouragement and setting an example of sorts. If I can do it, why not you?

**W**elcome to the ABA!  
**Can you introduce us to your business in a nutshell?**

I'm a relatively new dealer based in Cape Town, South Africa - currently dealing mostly online, but on the lookout for a retail location in the near future. We deal predominantly in 20th century fiction, with a specific interest in speculative fiction, fine press books and signed modern firsts.

**What was your route into the book trade**

I have a history of starting new ventures in my areas of interest. My other businesses include [adventureinc.co.za](http://adventureinc.co.za) and [thewineroom.co.za](http://thewineroom.co.za). Working from home during covid, I found myself gravitating towards reading and taking my personal book collecting more seriously. One thing led to another and - a few large auction purchases later - I had a new venture to juggle.

**If you had to choose just one, what would you say your key specialism is, and what drew you to it?**

A difficult question. Ultimately, I always gravitate back to speculative fiction, with a focus on science fiction, fantasy, gothic, and horror.

**What is your favourite aspect of working in the world of rare books?**

The excitement of discovery: nothing beats finding an important copy of your favourite author or following the rabbit-hole of new information. There is always something new to learn, experience and see.

**Are you a collector yourself, and if so, what do you collect?**

I am a collector and frequently find myself in a position of not wanting to sell new books coming in. I collect important science fiction and fantasy (specifically Hugo and Nebula Award winning novels); small press books (Centipede Press, Subterranean Press and more); natural history books (I have an academic background in



**Christo Snyman**  
*Rare Collections*

**Specialisms:**  
 modern first editions; signed books; speculative fiction and Livre d'Artiste books

[rarecollections.co.za](http://rarecollections.co.za)

Tel: +27 82 775 8439  
 E: [info@rarecollections.co.za](mailto:info@rarecollections.co.za)

Constantia,  
 Cape Town,  
 7945,  
 South Africa



Zoology and evolutionary processes); as well as fine press books, specifically from The Limited Editions Club. For the latter I am working on an updated checklist and bibliography along with Carol Grossman Porter (ABAA), hopefully to be published soon.

***What do you think is the impulse behind book collecting?***

Naturally I think collecting is a very deeply instinctual human behaviour, with books offering the ideal avenue for indulgence of this need. Regardless of one's interests in life, books are an ideal source of information with variety and novelty that could keep any collector busy for many lifetimes.

***Do you have a favourite item currently in stock?***

Difficult question and depending on my mood the answer could vary greatly. Right now, I would have to say it is my copy of *The Chronicles of the Golden Friars* by S.J. Le Fanu, a virtually impossible title to find. In this case it was also formerly M.R. James's copy, which makes it even more unique

***Have you observed any recent collecting trends that have surprised, delighted, or bewildered you?***

In my area of interest, I would say the massive popularity of small press publishers like Centipede, Suntup, Subterranean and more. They mostly focus on speculative fiction titles, with a heavy weighting towards horror titles. I believe they are doing a sterling job in introducing a new generation of collectors to the trade.





The Rare Collections library



***Encouraging new blood in the trade is important, but it's a tough time to set up a business. What would be your advice for people who want to begin dealing rare books?***

Firstly, follow your passion and you will eventually attract like-minded collectors to your business. Secondly, although less exciting, I would strongly suggest that one builds a working understanding of basic accounting and business practices; a lack of which more often than not causes the demise of many a small business.

***What are you most excited and most concerned about in the current landscape of the rare book trade?***

Most exciting might be small press publishers introducing an entire new generation of

collectors to the trade. Most concerning would be the growing problem of counterfeit items hitting the market and seemingly lack of interest to combat this. I'm frequently reporting problematic accounts on online retail platforms, only to see them trading the same material a week later. I'm also surprised to see how many problematic items are listed by important auction houses.

***Do you have a favourite book fair?***

Being based in Cape Town I have to date only attended the Chelsea Book Fair, where I was also an exhibitor. I loved meeting many other ABA members there, and I very much look forward to attending Firsts London and Worldcon in Glasgow later this year.



### **Welcome to the ABA! Can you introduce us to your business in a nutshell?**

Marshall Rare Books is a family business started by my dad Bruce over 50 years ago. We specialise mostly in travel and exploration, voyages, atlases and natural history.

### **What was your route into the book trade**

When I was at university I helped my Dad with photography and producing catalogues for him, and afterwards went to work as a rare book specialist in a couple of auction houses. It wasn't until the pandemic that I finally re-entered the trade full time, and in 2022 became a partner at Marshall Rare Books.

### **If you had to choose just one, what would you say your key specialism is, and what drew you to it?**

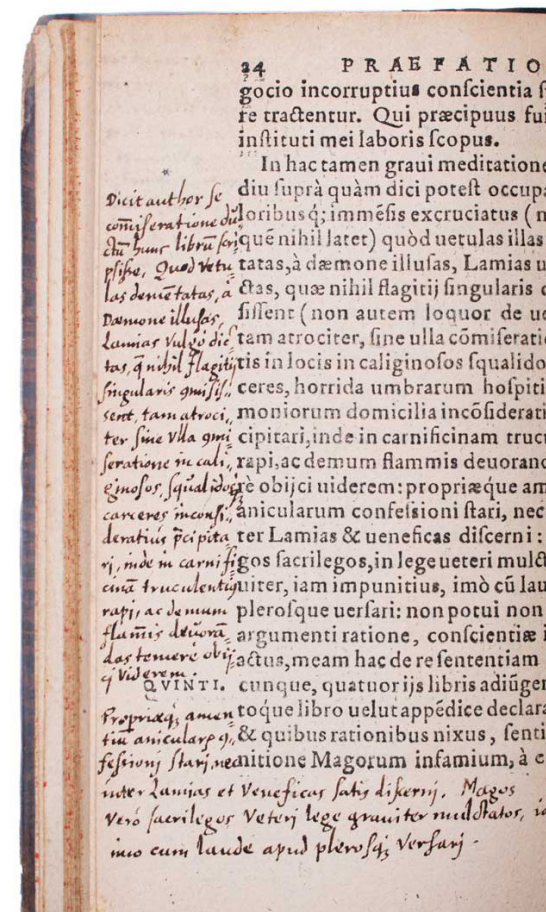
A year ago I would've said piracy and buccaneering was the thing I specialised in most, but recently I've been working on a lot of material to do with the European witch hunts in the early modern

period. I guess I'm drawn to the stories of people who lived outside the law or were victims of it.

### **What is your favourite aspect of working in the world of rare books?**

Getting stuck into research when I'm cataloguing is my favourite thing. Although working in the auction environment was fun, it was really fast-paced so being able to take the time to really research the books I'm selling is something I enjoy.

*De praestigiis daemonum* (1563)  
by Johann Weyer



## **Clare Marshall** *Marshall Rare Books*

### **Specialisms:**

Natural history, travel and exploration, atlases and maps, witchcraft and demonology.

marshallrarebooks.com

Tel: +44 (0) 1242 672997

E: info@marshallrarebooks.com

20 Gretton Rd  
Gotherington  
Cheltenham  
GL52 9QU





that will be interesting to see.

***Do you have a favourite book fair?***

We did Chelsea for the first time last year and I really enjoyed it! Chelsea Old Town Hall is a beautiful venue and it had a really nice, busy, energy, so it's definitely become a favourite.

***Do you have a favourite item currently in stock?***

I have a lot of favourites, but the one I'm most excited about right now is our first edition of *De praestigiis daemonum* (1563) by Johann Weyer. It's the first book written in defence of those accused of witchcraft, but this copy is really cool because it's got annotations in Latin by a Regimental Council member from Bavaria, talking about a lot of other demonologists, including Weyer's biggest hater Jean Bodin.

***What are you most excited and most concerned about in the current landscape of the rare book trade?***

The cost of living crisis is on everyone's minds right now, and as rare books are a luxury item it's going to have an effect. I don't think it will necessarily stop people from buying rare books though, but maybe the kinds of books they're buying will change and



*A General History of the Lives and Adventures of the Most Famous Highwaymen, Murders, Street-Robbers, To which is added A Genuine Account of the VOYAGES and PLUNDERS of the most Notorious PYRATES, Johnson, Captain Charles, 1734.*



## Rebekah Cron *Henry Sotheran*

### Specialisms:

Modern First Editions,  
Philosophy, Esoterica and  
Counterculture

[www.sotherans.co.uk](http://www.sotherans.co.uk)

Tel: +44 (0)207 439 6151  
E: [books@sotherans.co.uk](mailto:books@sotherans.co.uk)

2 Sackville Street  
Piccadilly, London  
W1S 3DP



### **Welcome to the ABA! What was your route into the book trade?**

Thank you very much!  
My grandfather collected medieval manuscripts. I used to spend most weekends in his library - which to a young child felt like a small maze - sitting with him looking at the books and keeping my sticky fingers away from the incunables! While I was studying for my degree in Philosophy at the University of Exeter, I spent two months interning at Quaritch. It was there that I really fell in love with the trade, and once that was over, I had made up my mind that I never wanted to do anything else. I've never looked back.

### **What is your favourite aspect of working in the world of rare books?**

You are constantly learning and discovering new things. Every day brings a new problem to solve, or the chance to research an author or title you may never have heard of before. Most of all, I enjoy being able to handle historical objects which have passed through countless

hands over the years, especially those I would otherwise never be able to own myself.

### **Are you a collector yourself, and if so, what do you collect?**

Whenever a customer asks me what I would recommend they collect, I always give the same answer - that they should simply collect what they themselves love. For me, it's an eclectic mix! I am close to completing a set of signed books from Carlos Ruiz Zafón's *Cemetery of Forgotten Books* series - they are stunningly written novels which I have returned to again and again over the years. If anyone out there has a signed copy of *The Labyrinth of the Spirits*, please do get in touch!

### **Do you have a favourite item currently in stock?**

We very recently had a beautiful first edition of Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*, which is a book I have always coveted. It is such an important, timeless work, and I think it was with us for less than 24 hours. That was a difficult one to let go!

***Encouraging new blood in the trade is important, but it's a tough time to set up a business. What would be your advice for people who want to begin dealing rare books?***

Don't be afraid to ask for help! My advice would be to speak to as many booksellers as possible, and to visit as many fairs as you can. I have been lucky enough over the last ten years to have met (and effectively be mentored by) so many fascinating people, and to lean on the wealth of their combined experience. Courses, degrees and seminars help, but there is nothing like learning from the best. As I look to my future in the trade, I will be needing their help more than ever.

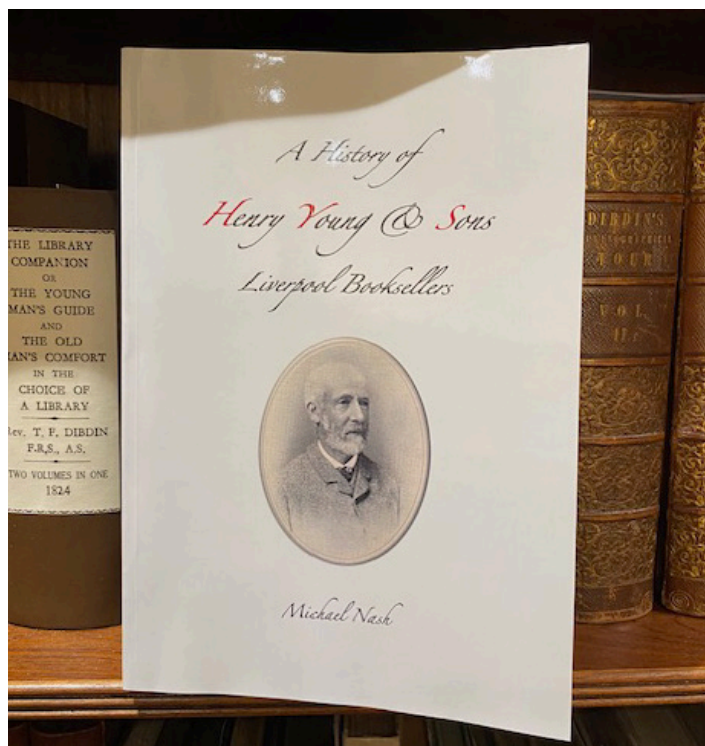
***Do you have a favourite book fair?***

I absolutely love the New York book fair. It's on a scale like nothing else I have ever encountered, and a fascinating opportunity to explore the stands of dealers from all over the world. It's an absolute treasure-trove, and you never know what you are going to find. Plus, the bloody marys are excellent!



**ABA Library Donation**

## *A History of Henry Young & Sons*



*A History of Henry Young & Sons: Liverpool Booksellers and Publishers, 1849 - 1998*, Michael Nash, (Printed for private publication, Wirral: Brunstath Press, 2023)

**W**e are grateful to Michael Nash, retired partner of Marine & Cannon Books, for donating a copy of his work on the Liverpool Bookseller Henry Young to the ABA Library, held by Peter Harrington. Young, a native of Truro, Cornwall, came to Liverpool as a child and established his business in 1849. It passed to Henry's sons in 1887 and survived a buyout and the Blitz, eventually being taken over by Blackwells.

If you would like to consult this or any other book in the ABA library, please contact [mail@peterharrington.co.uk](mailto:mail@peterharrington.co.uk).



# EDINBURGH BOOK FAIR 2024



*Illustration by James McBey from The Bookman's Journal and Print Collector 1924 reproduced with permission*

**Radisson Blu Hotel, High Street**  
**Friday 22nd & Saturday 23rd March 2024**  
**Free entry**

*Scotland's premier event for rare, antiquarian, and collectable books of all kinds, with dozens of booksellers from around the UK offering books, maps, prints, photographs, and ephemera.*



Organised Jointly



John Atkinson

## Destination Dealer

# *John Atkinson Fine & Rare Books*

Harrogate

**Our new occasional series visits dealers around the UK, getting to know their shops, specialisms, and what they're looking out for on the market.**

### ***Could you give us a brief introduction to John Atkinson Fine and Rare Books?***

We started trading around 2007, mainly online, using Ebay, and eventually other selling platforms like Abe and Biblio. We then applied for PBFA membership and started doing fairs, sometimes getting up at 4:00 in the morning to drive from Darlington to London!

We're now a multi-platform dealer and we have shop which has completely changed the business. Opening the shop has helped us sell books of course — though good stuff always sells — but it has ultimately enabled us to buy more stock, as people now know where to bring things to show to us.

We began with a small shop in 2018 and then got drunk one night during lockdown and decided to open a bigger shop when all the shops were closed. And we did! It was mainly Polish larger that did it. And now here we are!

### ***What was your personal journey into the rare book trade?***

I was always interested in books because I was forced to read by parents, and got taken to National Trust properties on a Sunday when I wanted to watch the Italian football on Channel 4. They also used to take me to antiques fairs and things like that, so I always knew I could tell if something was old and valuable by looking at it. That's probably what prompted me. When I ran out of money while at university I started selling football shirts. And then one day I was going through my mum and Dad's attic, and they said I could put

stuff on Ebay for them. I found about seven or eight *Just William* books that I'd bought for 10p each when I was younger. I put one on eBay and it went for £45, and I thought, well, I'm buying Real Madrid shirts from this guy in Malaysia at £6 a shipment, so I replaced that with books, and I made £50. Next, I bought a book from Anthony Smithson [of Keel Row Books], an Ian Fleming, and I became obsessed with the artwork of the dust wrappers and the aesthetic of twentieth century first editions. That's why we've chosen to display items in our show front-on, with ladder-style shelving lining the walls. I always think it's such a shame when you walk into a bookshop, and you get spine blindness from the volume of spine-on material.

***So your specialism is really twentieth century first editions?***

Yes, we tend to only buy first editions, first printings, many of them signed. We do have some old older books – the classics like Dickens etc., but we don't really do non-fiction, though we also specialise in signed sporting books. We have a couple of typescripts and manuscripts, but it's mainly the popular twentieth century titles we like.

***Can you say a bit more about what drew you towards book and dust jacket design?***

I was interested in the importance of the link between the author and artists, like Roald Dahl and Quentin Blake. But I also quite like the more 'boring' examples of book design. I like the Gollancz yellow wrappers, and the Penguins.

***Do you have a favourite item currently in stock?***

I recently bought a copy of Daphne du Maurier's second novel *I'll Never Be Young Again*, I think its the second time I've seen a copy in the dust wrapper, so that's a really nice thing to have. I also have a copy of *Sagittarius Rising* by Cecil Lewis which is a really famous critique of the RFC with this super dust jacket designed by Roger Furse, who did a lot of the Nancy Mitford dust jackets.

***Is there a 'holy grail' item you're always on the lookout for?***

I've always quite liked an inscribed *Hobbit* - that would be quite nice to find.

I had a copy of Vera Britain's *Testament of Youth* which came with these beautiful letters describing her work as a nurse during the war. I regret selling that. But I also think one of the philosophies of bookselling life (although I hate using that word 'philosophy' because it makes me sound like a football manager) is that special items will always come back to you. I hope to get that book back at some point.

***Are you a collector yourself?***

I'm not, but I collect other things – I collect whisky. But I find I can't have my own book collection. I know a lot of dealers do, but I'm in too much danger of just selling it. I seem to have programmed myself in such a way that I can't hold onto things. I've had about ten

collections over the years and sold them all. I'm a bit addicted to the selling part.

### ***Do you find you sell more online or through the shop?***

Our business is 95% online, though it can flip the other way within a week. The material at the higher doesn't tend to go online as I wouldn't be doing my job if I couldn't sell that myself.

### ***Do you have a favourite book fair?***

I do like Firsts London. Its lovely to come down to London and stay at Sloane Place. I'm a Chelsea football supporter! It's a nice walk into work along the King's Road for four days, and I love the atmosphere you get at the fair. It helps that many of the people walking around it have money to spend and that's the end game ultimately. I like Chelsea as well – it's buzzy and a great way to get out of the shop and actively sell.

### ***What advice would you give to a new collector attending book fairs?***

It's an old cliché but 'buy what you like' is always good advice. At the moment I would advise people to buy Mick Herron. First editions are actually quite hard to come by, but the success of *Slow Horses* on Apple TV has made it quite in demand. *Slow Horses* wasn't published in big numbers but was sent to libraries. *Dead Lions* was rejected in the UK but printed in the US. *Real Tigers* was his tour de force and helped him on. So collect Herron but read them as well!

### ***Do you have any favourite recent acquisitions?***

I recently found an inscribed copy of Churchill's *The Gathering Storm*, which is the first volume of his six part Second World War series. I bought it from a couple who came into the shop, and paid them rather good money for it. They found it in one of those library telephone boxes in a village near where they live!



## Destination Dealer

*Roger J. Treglown*

## Milnthorpe

***Can you give an overview of your career in the book trade?***

I started life as an apprentice Millwright in Manchester and later was a consultant engineer in the nuclear industry. I was born and bred in Hulme, a suburb of Manchester near the city centre.

I recall when I was a little boy going with my parents every Sunday afternoon to see their friends in south Manchester. On an early visit I wandered into a room at the front of the house, probably the lounge, where an alcove of old leather-bound books tempted me to remove one from the shelf and open it. At once the sweet, musky, faintly vanilla aroma hit me, and I was hooked. Many years later

I was offered the opportunity of buying an existing bookshop in Hale, Cheshire. After two years I joined the PBFA, and probably about five years later I joined the ABA.

In 2000 I was elected onto the ABA Committee, as it was in those days, and twenty-three years later I stood down from being a Council Member. During that time, I held a number of posts within the Association which culminated in my Presidency.

***Do you have a specialism or any particular area of interest in the items you stock?***

I originally started selling only chess books and issued 36 chess book catalogues. However, my business is now generally based on antiquarian books and pamphlets etc.



***Is there a 'holy grail' item you're always on the lookout for?***

I am interested in early printed books, and of course, we all want to find a Gutenberg.

***You'll have attended many book fairs over the years. Do you have a favourite bookfair?***

When I started off, I was probably doing something like forty-five fairs a year. Since then, I have reduced the number. Moving to the South Lake District a couple of years ago, I have embarked on a circuit of book fairs in West Yorkshire and North Lancashire of which I exhibit at eleven, plus local PBFA Fairs and national ABA Fairs.

I managed the ABA Chelsea Fair for 13 years, and branded it as 'the friendliest book fair,' which it still is. My friend and colleague Graham York looks after it now, and it remains my favourite fair on the book fair calendar. We must all thank Adrian Harrington for starting the book fair all those years ago.

***You served as ABA President from 2019 - 2021. What are your reflections on your time in office?***

It was a torrid and difficult time. Initially I had to find new premises for the ABA as The Booksellers Association wanted us to vacate our offices in Bell Yard by November 2019. In order to save money I took the decision to vacate much earlier that year. Then our Secretary, Camilla, was head hunted by one of the London Livery Companies. We found a replacement Secretary and new offices then we were hit by Covid. This resulted in

the Battersea, Chelsea, and Edinburgh (2020) Fairs having to be cancelled with a resulting financial loss to the Association. In view of this I convened weekly Management Meetings instead of the monthly ones. Those meetings and the understanding and patience of all the membership enabled the Association to survive.

***What advice would you give to a new collector who is looking to start their collection.***

Undoubtedly, the best way is to befriend an ABA bookseller. They will take you under their wing, educate, and guide you along your book collecting path.

***What parts of your bookselling year are you particularly looking forward to?***

I look forward to the annual SLAM Paris Book Fair. The good wine, good food and company are an added bonus.

***What are your thoughts on where the book trade is currently?***

I'm afraid the trade may be entering a less propitious period as a result of world affairs at the moment.



## The National Book Collecting Prize 2023

# *My Own Two Hands*

## Books and Ephemera about Making Dress and Textiles Before 1975

Emma Treleven on her 2023 National Book Collecting Prize winning collection, which highlights the often-hidden talents of generations of domestic women, and preserves the precious ephemeral records of their work for future makers.

***Congratulations on winning the National Book Collecting Prize! Your collection 'My Own Two Hands' is an enlightening record of dressmaking and textiles, including materials often overlooked by dealers and collectors. What have been your main sources for acquiring items for this collection?***

Thank you very much! I'm thrilled the ABA judges also appreciate the material I am so

passionate about.

My collection has grown in a slightly odd way — more often than not my acquisitions find me! Most of what I collect was very commonplace in most homes in the 20th century, so I often get people gifting me books and ephemera that belonged to their grandparents or older friends or elderly neighbours. Even my volunteers at work sometimes bring me wonderful items! I love it

when this happens because I get to find out a bit about the person who owned and used them originally, which doesn't usually happen when you purchase something from a shop, fair, or online. Most people tell me they don't have an interest themselves, but whatever they are offering seemed too important to throw away somehow, so they are usually really happy the material has found a home with me.

Otherwise, I often have decent luck in charity shops, again because what I'm looking for was fairly common a generation or two ago, but I do find exciting things at book and ephemera fairs from time to time too. Sometimes I will go searching for something specific online, but mostly I stumble across enough additions to my collection without actively looking to keep the collector in me happy.

### ***Do you have a favourite item from the collection?***

I wouldn't say I have a favourite, but I do have things that excite me more than others at times, or books I use more often than others.

I tend to go down rabbit holes when it comes to my making. When I get going on something, like silk flower making or 1930s pattern cutting, I get all the materials I have in my collection about that one idea or method or era out for inspiration and to help me learn. My wedding dress is a good example of this; I made the bodice to match an original skirt from about 1912, which is made from a type of needle lace called Battenburg lace. My needle lace pamphlets and books were my constant companions for about 4 months while I made

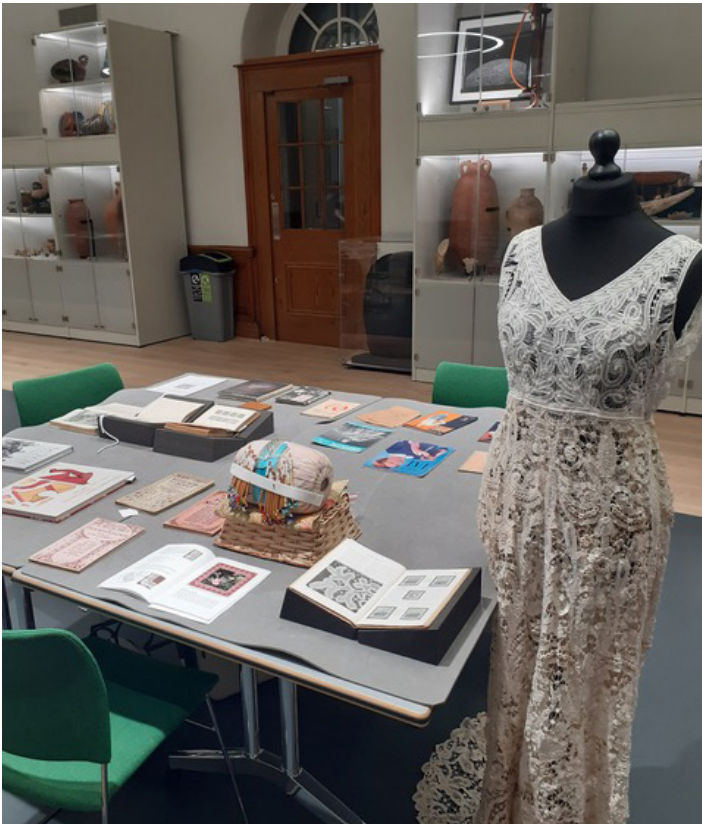
my bodice!

The ones I flip through the most often are probably my needlework compendiums, like my 'Weldon's Encyclopaedia of Needlework'. These compendiums usually contain everything from art deco rug making to hideous crochet doilies, to really chic knit hats, to fluffy baby jumpers, so they give an interesting view into the range of skills of domestic makers of the early-mid 20th century, as well as being charming, hilarious, and inspiring in equal measure.

***The collection preserves material that was created for a largely female, domestic audience, often printed on perishable or fragile materials. How has the ephemeral nature of the collection influenced your feelings about being a collector?***







It makes me feel more like a caretaker of knowledge, rather than just a collector. I collect these things for me, but ultimately I'm scared that if no one does, we will lose all of this beautiful knowledge and technique that was so important to women in the past.

The ephemeral nature of these materials is part of why I started collecting them in the first place. When I first started trying to figure out how to make more niche historic dress and textiles, it was often only the extremely beat up, slightly falling apart library books shoved on a bottom shelf that could answer my questions, which I found really sad and frustrating. If these materials were on their last legs now, what was going to answer the same nerdy questions I had in 50 or 100 years time? And then once I started thinking about that, it just ballooned really, and I went right down the

collecting rabbit hole.

One of the benefits of caring about the knowledge in these materials is that I can collect quite widely, which in turn gives me more options of things to make in the future. I might not want to make a waistcoat lined with old leather gloves at the moment, but at least because I've collected the how and why someone did during WWI, myself and subsequent others have the option to!

***This collection is very special in that it's a working collection, one that you use for research and making. Do you feel you've gained an insight into the lives of the women for whom these materials were originally created, through your active use of the same resources?***

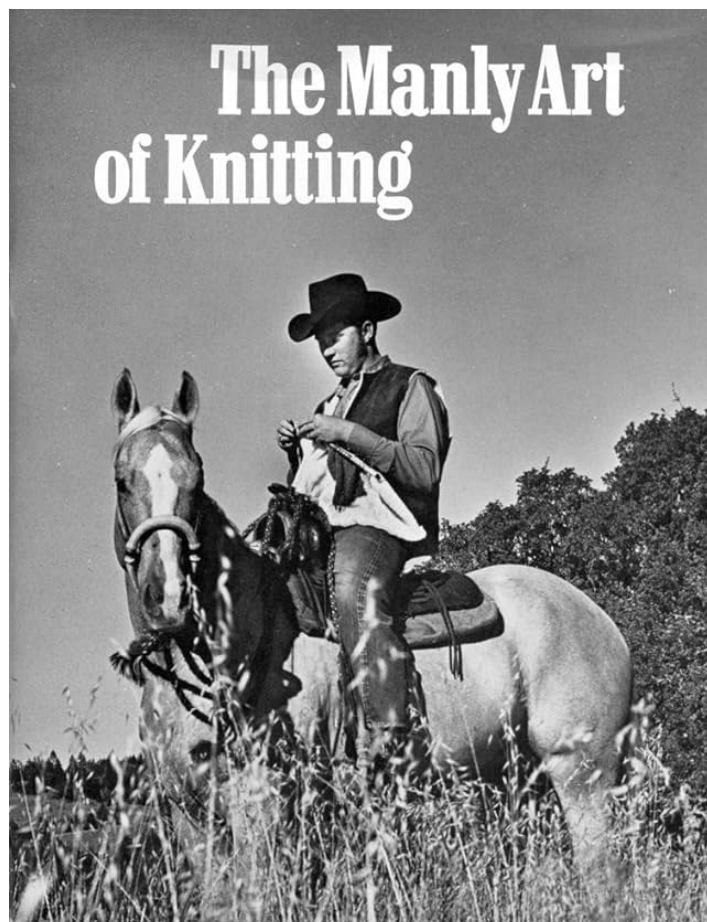
Absolutely! Most of my collection is about as far from 'god's copy' as you can get. I love seeing the use, the annotations — the signs that another person used what I'm holding to

***"I collect these things for me, but ultimately I'm scared that if no one does, we will lose all of this beautiful knowledge and technique that was so important to women in the past."***

learn something or express their creativity in the past.

It's especially fun when you get fitting or alteration notes. I love seeing how women customised projects and patterns for themselves, whether it's adding more room in the bust or using green yarn instead of blue, it all makes it more personal. Sometimes I'm even lucky enough to get the name of a past owner, which really brings the people to life for me.

You can learn a lot about how skilled these women were by giving the projects in my collection a go. Even the simplest things require a high level of manual dexterity, precision, and understanding of materials that most people today just don't have. The base



knowledge and skill level of a typical woman in a 'domestic' setting pre 1975 is so much higher than written history would lead us to believe, which can really be seen and felt throughout these materials. The more I use these materials the more respect I have for the women makers who came before me.

***One of your aims with this collection is to preserve material and techniques that might otherwise be lost. Do you have an endgame in mind in terms of donating it to an institution, or will it continue to grow exponentially?***

I would love to find an institution to donate it to eventually, but probably not until I'm old with arthritic hands and poor eyesight! Until then I plan on using it all to the best of my ability.

I know this is a common issue, especially as I work in museum collections, but I would really want my collection to be used in the same way I use it, not just have it sitting on a shelf gathering dust. I want it to remain a working collection for as long as possible, so I guess I would try to find an institution that could use it in teaching, or would have students that are likely to be interested makers.

Another reason I probably will keep growing it till I'm old and grey is wherever I donate it to, I would want to give them enough money to catalogue and house it all. I know all too well how short staffed and short of money libraries, archives, and museums are, and what a backlog large collections can cause in making material available. If I want to make sure my

collection is as useful as possible, I feel like the only fair thing to do would be to accompany my donation with some funding alongside it!

***Is there a favourite fact about dressmaking history, technique, or piece of trivia that you have learned as a result of this collection?***

I don't really have a favourite fact or technique, but I do think parts of my collection offer surprising bits of worldly wisdom or a good laugh.

Quite a few items, particularly those published during WWI and WWII, encourage mending, buying the best quality materials you can afford, and boycotting fast fashion. These are concepts that are very relevant in today's world, but I think most people assume they are modern reactions to the current climate crisis, not something that has been worrying women makers for hundreds of years. The designer Vivienne Westwood said 'buy less, choose well, make it last', which is a motto many of the authors of the materials in my collection would heartily agree with.

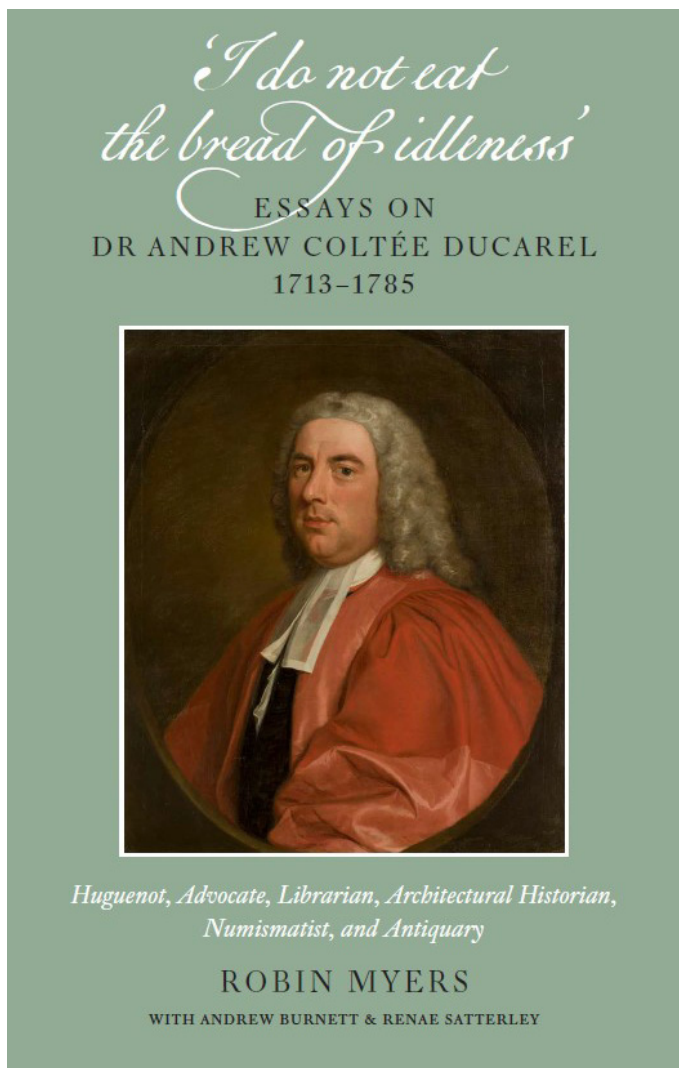
One of the oddest books in my collection is *The Manly Art of Knitting*, published in 1972, which features a cowboy on a horse engrossed in his knitting on the cover. The 'history' section at the beginning states that as recently as the late 19th century it was common for men to knit, a fact which I have never seen any evidence of, but hey, if it encouraged more 1970s men/boys/cowboys to pick up some needles I won't complain!

***The Book Collecting Prize came with £500 to help expand your collection. Do you have plans for how to spend this money yet?***

I have a few ideas! I really didn't expect to win so I don't have any firm plans dreamed up yet, but I would like to spend some of it on things that I've wanted for ages but not had the excuse to purchase yet, such as a collected volume of the Dryad Handicrafts leaflets from the mid- 20th century. Like needlework compendiums, these leaflets cover a huge range of subjects, from fabric printing to shoemaking, and have really interesting instructions.

I recently ran across a book called *How to Become a 'Professional' Amateur Dressmaker* from 1962 that I would love to have a copy of, as I think it promotes a level of skill that many dressmakers, including myself, try very hard to achieve despite our 'amateur' status.

But the main thing I have in mind is trying to acquire more manuscript material, such as sample books from women or girls learning how to sew. I recently acquired one of these from 1927 and it's so personal, I feel really lucky to have it. I certainly hope she got an A because her sewing and penmanship is exquisite, much better than mine when I was making a similar booklet in my high school fashion class! Most manuscript material I see, like 18th century lace making pattern books, is always way out of my price range, but this prize should hopefully help me add some really lovely more recent manuscripts to my collection.



## Book Review

# *'I Do Not Eat the Bread of Idleness'*

*Essays on Dr Andrew Coltée Ducarel, 1713-1785, Huguenot, Advocate, Librarian, Architectural Historian, Numismatist and*

*Antiquary*, by Robin Myers (Billesdon: The Garendon Press, 2023). Distributed by Bernard Quaritch Ltd, £45.

Review by Giles Mandelbrote

Robin Myers, an Honorary Member of the ABA as well as former President of the Bibliographical Society and Archivist of the Stationers' Company, was waiting with increasing impatience for the publication of this book at the time of her death in May last year. Even in extreme old age, she was not content simply to collect together and recycle papers which she had published in a range of places between 1996 and 2018. Instead she assembled what amounted to a research team to help her revise her earlier work and she both commissioned supplementary pieces and wrote some herself.

The result is a triumph: a series of interconnected essays which weave through the life and many-sided career of Andrew Ducarel, who was Librarian to the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace, a specialist in the Roman law practised in the ecclesiastical and Admiralty courts, an inquisitive observer of landscape, architecture and archaeological finds, and a collector of books, coins and medals. Robin Myers herself contributes three extensively revised and updated chapters on Ducarel's pioneering attempts to classify Anglo-Norman gothic architecture, on his work from the 1750s until the 1780s as one of the longest-serving Lambeth Librarians, and on the formation of his own personal library, sold by auction in 1786, before finally asking 'Was Ducarel a bibliomaniac?'

To these is added a new chapter on Ducarel's friendship with his collaborator Philip Morant, the historian of Essex. Further chapters come from Renae Satterley on the law library of Doctors' Commons, one of the lost libraries of London, sold at Hodgson's in 1861, of which

a few fragments now survive at the Royal Courts of Justice and the Middle Temple. The volume also contains a substantial and well-documented account, by Andrew Burnett, of Ducarel's activities as both a scholar and collector of coins and medals: it is too easily forgotten nowadays that the coin cabinet formed an integral part of eighteenth-century libraries.

Not everyone liked Ducarel. He was variously accused of gluttony, drunkenness and plagiarism, but the validity of these allegations is difficult to pin down. Robin Myers offers a plausible defence by demonstrating the collaborative and clubbable nature of so much antiquarian research in the eighteenth century: it was a social activity in which information would be shared and often circulated first in manuscript. Describing his laborious and systematic work at Lambeth, indexing and making abstracts of the medieval archbishops' registers, Ducarel insisted (alluding to a verse in Proverbs) 'You see, Sir, I do not eat the bread of idleness.' His indexes are still in use today.

Much of Ducarel's working life was dominated by the pursuit of patronage. He was successful in gaining appointments not only at Lambeth Palace but also at the College of Advocates in Doctors' Commons and at the High Court of Admiralty, where he had the lucrative task of adjudicating claims on prize ships captured from the French. But he was disappointed not to gain preferment as a sub-librarian at the newly founded British Museum. One of the many insights offered here is the way in which Ducarel's antiquarian publications, often printed in small editions, as well as deluxe manuscript products of his research, were

deployed to curry favour with influential people and to sustain elaborate networks of mutual support.

Through Ducarel's antiquarian circles, we are plunged into some of the bibliographical causes célèbres of the eighteenth century. Along with Joseph Ames, Andrew Gifford and John Lewis, Ducarel busied himself in collecting evidence to trace the history of the earliest printed editions of the Bible in English. He also participated in the contemporary controversies about the origin of printing and the rival claims of Mainz and Haarlem. One related myth, which Ducarel investigated and dismissed, was that an Archbishop of Canterbury had brought over a Dutch printer, Frederick Corsellis, to set up the first English printing press in Oxford in 1468, several years before William Caxton's arrival in Westminster.

These lively essays rest on a solid foundation of painstaking new research, mostly undertaken by Penelope Bulloch and Christine Ferdinand. Archival material relating to Ducarel has been identified in many new locations; annotated and presentation copies of his books, as well as books from his own library, have been tracked down, from Toronto and Michigan to Paris and The Hague. There is a good index, a family tree and an extensive bibliography, of Ducarel's works in manuscript and print, and of the archival and printed sources. As Robin Myers intended, this is also a very handsome book, elegantly designed by Robert Dalrymple and illustrated with nearly 60 reproductions of contemporary engravings, manuscripts, letters and documents. She would have been proud of it.

## Book Review

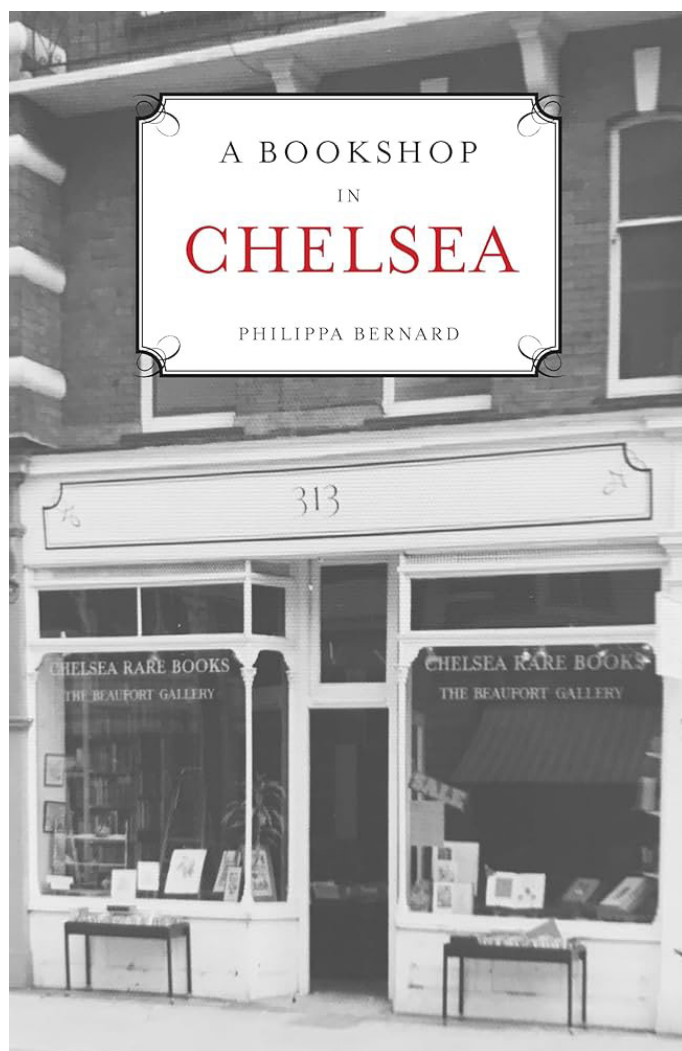
*A Bookshop in Chelsea*

Philippa Bernard, (Lewes: Unicorn Press, 2023),

Review by Adrian Harrington

What a treat! A real stroll down Memory Lane, paralleling my time on the King's Road in Chelsea. Philippa's engaging account begins in 1971, the same year that I joined my brother, Peter, in the Chelsea Antique Market at 253 King's Road. By the start of the new millennium, Chelsea Rare Books had departed the world-famous thoroughfare. We had also gone, three years previously. The rent that they were paying in 1971 of £700 pa was a distant dream. The new rents on the King's Road made many shops unviable.

Bernard and Philippa had bought the shop, with no experience of the book trade, from Robin Greer, renowned for his specialist subject, children's illustrators. Their first sale was a book from the famous racks outside for a 50p coin. Six months earlier and it would have been a ten bob note. Cheques were universally accepted and seldom bounced. There were no mobile phones or computers. Reference books, for most dealers, consisted of a well-thumbed run of Book Auction Records! We relied on instinct and the helpful guidance of the trade and our customers. The world seemed to be very hungry for all areas of antique and fine art collecting, and books were



no exception. Dealers from Europe and North America beat a path to London and especially Chelsea. It was this lively environment that allowed our intrepid couple to learn the ropes very quickly. Bernard's avuncular style endeared him to everyone and Phillipa's grounded good sense and friendliness quickly made Chelsea Rare Books the 'go to' place. I always enjoyed popping in there, seeking books that I hoped to profit from and a friendly conversation.

Philippa speaks warmly of her various assistants over the years. They were generally young women and all of them remained friends, long after they had moved on.

“Amor Librorum Nos Unit” - the love of books unites us, the adopted motto of the book trade, seemed very much to apply here. The bonds that are formed working in books stay strong and Philippa’s various accounts of all who came into her shop, being captivated, then captured, and finally forming lifelong friendships, repeatedly demonstrates this. Even a book thief gets a kind word. Once caught, Leo gave him permission to ‘steal’ from the racks outside. Value not to exceed £1, number of books per week not to exceed one. It became a routine with our thief happily waving his latest acquisition to Leo to demonstrate his adhesion to the deal!

The various accounts of the great, the good and the not so good echoed our own experience. Many rock stars headed for the King’s Road as did film stars, the aristocracy, several politicians and famous people in general. Many were or became avid book collectors. Princess Margaret was a visitor who also opened the ABA Bookfair one year. Philippa’s accounts of such visitors are a labyrinth of connected people, all demonstrating how lucky we were to be at the epicentre that was Chelsea. Chelsea Rare Books was a hub where bibliophiles gathered to meet and discuss their various artistic and book passions.

Philippa’s book buying in Chelsea is the one area where my own experience was entirely different. Chelsea Rare Books were always being offered books. Harrington Bothers, as Peter and I were then, never seemed to get that opportunity. It’s one of the great advantages of having a shop – it inspires

trust. I have found this at my own premises in Tunbridge Wells. In Chelsea we were in an antiques market - the World’s first antiques market in fact - a situation I suspect that meant we were somewhat outside the mainstream of the London book trade. In fact, one past president of the ABA gave “they trade from a market stall” as a good reason to deny us membership of the ABA. For Philippa and Bernard, the offers of books came to them in abundance, including a collection of books from Darwin’s library, several of them inscribed! Happy days!

The Beaufort Gallery was the name they gave to their prints and maps department that they opened in the basement of the shop. In those days the breaking up of books for their plates was prolific and very controversial, as well as being against ABA rules, as it is now. Dealers from all over Europe and America were buying travel and Natural History books for the value their plates would have once separated from the binding. I know of one London bookseller who evicted an Italian dealer from his shop. The dealer had started to dismantle the books he had purchased whilst still on the premises, saying it would make transporting the plates easier! Philippa tells us that their source of

*"Phillipa's grounded good sense and friendliness quickly made Chelsea Rare Books the 'go to' place."*

engravings was from incomplete and broken books. The strange thing is that now that the craze has passed, many of the remaining intact books have little to no value.

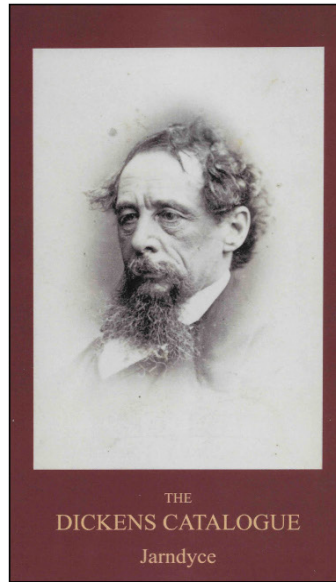
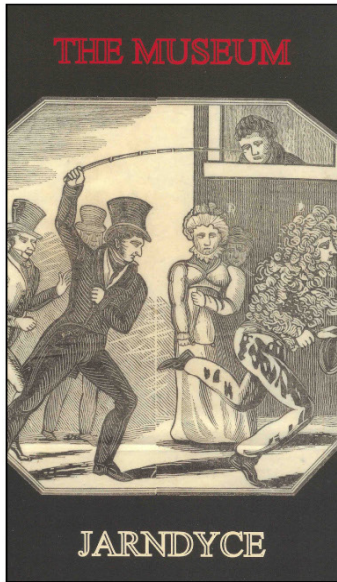
Philippa's amazing recall of the various book runners, thieves, awkward customers, great friendships formed and extraordinary collectors paints a wonderful picture of the times. As she has moved from selling books to writing them, I am grateful that she took the time to write this one and I heartily recommend it.

*"The bonds that are formed working in books stay strong and Philippa's various accounts of all who came into her shop, being captivated, then captured, and finally forming lifelong friendships, repeatedly demonstrates this."*



Philippa Bernard and Adrian Harrington at Chelsea Rare Book Fair, November 2023





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\*\*\* A DOUBLE-PRIZE-WINNING BINDING

**BATES, H.E. (Herbert Ernest), 1905-1974 : THROUGH THE WOODS : THE ENGLISH WOODLAND - APRIL TO APRIL. £2,500**  
 London : Victor Gollancz, 1936. First edition. Slooten botanical essays from Bates, chronicling the yearly round of the English woodland, illustrated with wood engravings by Agnes Miller Parker (1895-1980) — "He talks openly, sometimes provocatively, of everything from the mushroom to the fox, from the posher to the cuckoo. The crowning glory of the book lies in the illustrations. It would be difficult to exaggerate the exquisite quality of these wood engravings. They are superb" (*The Bookman*, 28th October 1936). The book is here presented in an equally superb and double-prize-winning binding by Kate Holland.  
 Crown 8vo (254 x 190mm), 142, [illeg]. Bound in full black goatskin with almond-stained calf inserts, some hand-dyed in green, turquoise and orange; hand-woven headbands; sprinkled edges; hand-made green paste-paper endpapers — "the cover shows the dewdrops caught on a spider's web found on an early morning walk — the monochrome palette reflects the beautiful woodcut illustrations by Agnes Miller Parker" (*Kate Holland*, bound in a custom-made clinched leather and in excellent state. The binding won both the *Manuscript Medal* and *First Prize* in the *Open Choice* category in the *Designer Bookbinders' annual competition* in 2006.

**156**

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*Medieval history from the library of Dr Mark Whittow (1957-2017)*

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 All our stock is searchable by author or title at [www.benkerbooks.com](http://www.benkerbooks.com) and may usually be seen at our warehouse Monday-Friday between 10 am & 5.30 pm - we advise visitors to telephone or email in advance to be sure.  
 We regularly issue catalogues of rare and scholarly books on the Middle Ages & Renaissance, and we may be interested in buying books in these fields.

Edmund Bennett Michaelmas 2023 Andrew Kerr

# Catalogue Review

James Fergusson

The memory of that 'obsessive reader of bookseller's catalogues' Roger Lonsdale, Professor of English Literature at Oxford and ardent pursuer and propagator of 18th-century poetry, is being grandly served by **Christopher Edwards** ([chr.edwards@btinternet.com](mailto:chr.edwards@btinternet.com)), the sage of Henley. His first two Lonsdale catalogues covered the years 1640-1740. His

latest, 90, edges gingerly into the next 100 years - 'The Library of Roger Lonsdale, Part III - 1740-1840: A-E', 206 items.

Edwards's formula is the same as before - each entry ending in a provenance note of when and where and for how much Lonsdale bought his book, the information drawn, when it is there, from the collector's carefully maintained index cards. Thus, his first book, published in 1965, was a 'literary biography' of the writer and musician Charles Burney,

friend of Samuel Johnson. The first book by Burney that Lonsdale is listed as acquiring is his *magnum opus*, the four-volume *A General History of Music* (1782–9, the first volume a second edition, the last three first editions), found by Lonsdale in 1960 for £12, ex-Thomas Penrice of Great Yarmouth, amateur musician and art collector, at Drawda Hall Bookshop on the High Street in Oxford (next door to John Sparrow's lodgings, and now, alas, just Oxford Souvenirs). Edwards prices it at £1,250. Burney's own first book was on quite another subject, the anonymous *An Essay Towards a History of the Principal Comets That Have Appeared since the Year 1742* (1769). Lonsdale didn't buy a copy until 1972, for £25, ex-Medico-Chirurgical Society of Aberdeen, from Francis Edwards in London. Christopher Edwards has it at £850. How does one compare these relative prices? Never mind the price of bread, Lonsdale was unafraid to pay quite heftily, which gave him licence to enjoy his bargains. Edwards's highest Burney prices are for *Account of an Infant Musician [i.e. William Crotch]* (1779), a 'very rare offprint' inscribed by Burney to his friend Andrew Lumisden, £2,250 (bought by Lonsdale much later, from C.R. Johnson, 1992, £650), and the 'extremely uncommon' *Commemoration of Handel* programme, 1784, £1,950 (bound with 11 other works, bought by Lonsdale from Blackwell's in 1966, 17 guineas reduced to 15).

B is a fine letter for an 18th-century author. Lonsdale bought James Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (third edition, 1786) from Sanders in Oxford, probably in 1961, for one guinea (Edwards, £250); then, perhaps in the same year from Thornton's, *The Life of Samuel*

*Johnson* (third edition, including additions by Burney and Edmund Malone, 1799), for two guineas (Edwards, £850). His best Boswell bargain was *Letters of the Right Honourable Lady Jane Douglas . . .* (first Dublin edition, 1768), the book of the 'Douglas Cause' edited, at least in part, by Boswell and 'exceptionally rare', bought from Carraig Books, 1977, for £7 (Edwards, £1,250).

B too for Beckford. Lonsdale edited William Beckford's *Vathek* for the Oxford English Novels series in 1970. He bought a first edition (*An Arabian Tale*, 1786) from Blackwell's, in perhaps 1962, for eight guineas, reduced from 10 (Edwards, £2,500). In 1969 he edited the works of Thomas Gray, William Collins and Oliver Goldsmith for Longman's Annotated English Poets, and in 1977 those of Gray and Collins for Oxford University Press: here are editions of Collins bought from Richard Hatchwell, 1965, G.V.M. Heap of Wells, 1965, A.R. Heath, 1966, and W. Smith of Reading, date unknown, as well as Collins's *An Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland* (second edition, 1789), John Sparrow's copy, bought from Quaritch, 1993, £50 (Edwards, £450), and the 'scarce and important' *Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegoric Subjects* (1747), bought from Edwards himself, 1998, £250 (Edwards 2023, £2,500).

In 1989 Lonsdale edited *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets* (1989). Here are to be found contributors to that ground-breaking anthology such as Matilda Betham, whose only book, *Elegies and other small poems* (1797), Lonsdale found at Hyde Park Books, Leeds, in 1981, £28 (Edwards, £1,250). Christopher Edwards's

catalogues of the Lonsdale library will, surely, become required reading for anyone interested in the literature of the long 18th century – and its collectors.

Those enterprising booksellers **Jarndyce** (books@jarndyce.co.uk) have been astonishingly productive. CCLXIII, 'The Summer Miscellany', 431 items, had an unrecorded book from Lewis Carroll's library, the 1843 *Poems* of Alexander James Beresford Hope, a brother-in-law of the prime minister Lord Salisbury, £850; 14 patents 'relating to the hat making trade', 1855–79, £250; seven drawings by Kate Greenaway for *Starlight Stories Told to Bright Eyes and Listening Ears* (1877), £1,700; an unpublished letter from Thomas Hardy to Sydney Cockerell, 20 October 1922, about (Charles M.?) Doughty, 'de la Mare' and others, £950; and an original design, *circa* 1955, for a postcard of the Loch Ness Monster, 'drawn on the spot at closing time last Saturday "nicht" by our special artist Mr. McBooze', £150.

CCLXII was a plump 'Books, Pamphlets, Manuscripts & Ephemera 1635–1836', 416 items, rich in songsheets and broadsides. CCLXVI, 'The Museum', 300 items, ranged from a mid-18th-century 'receipt' book with a recipe for haggis (elegantly scripted, perhaps by an untraced Elizabeth Hinde, £5,800), a presentation copy of Mary Tighe's privately printed 1805 *Psyche* (to her close friend Susan Buttica, 'a great rarity', £12,500) and a 'beautiful' copy in wrappers of Polidori's *Vampyre* (second issue, 1819, £8,000), to a rare Burke and Hare narrative with gruesomely *noir* engravings (*The Murderers of the Close*, 1829,

£5,500), an F. Anstey manuscript inscribed to Horace Pym (his 1884 novel *The Giant's Robe*, £6,500) and a powerful 1936 polemic by the pacifist and suffragist Clara Gilbert Cole (*The Objectors to Conscription and War: a record of their suffering and silence; their letters and tribunal appeals; their testimony for liberty of conscience*, £600).

Best of all were CCLXV, 'The Dickens Catalogue', 561 items, with CCLXVII, 'Dickens, Biography, Criticism, &c: a supplement to The Dickens Catalogue', 350 items – the latest bulletins in Jarndyce's ongoing campaign for the 19th century's most energetic writer/journalist. Here were such tantalizing items of ephemera as a printed invitation ticket to the 'Private Trial of the Murder in *Oliver Twist*', a small card signed by Dickens himself admitting the bearer, 'Mr Knox [possibly the journalist and magistrate Alexander Andrew Knox] & friend', to a test run at St James's Hall, Piccadilly, 14 November 1868, of the author's reading of the murder scene in *Oliver Twist*. 'Around 100 people attended the reading,' Jarndyce note, 'into which Dickens "threw all his genius as an actor". It was "a most amazing and terrific thing", William Harness wrote to Dickens afterwards; "I am bound to tell you that I have an almost irresistible impulse upon me to scream . . ." ' Jarndyce price the ticket at £3,250. For a little less, at £3,000, you could have procured an alluring pencil sketch by 'Phiz' of Little Nell, *c*1840. And for £2,250 you could have had ('Sold under licence regarding the sale of ivory') a small, square ivory token etched 'Charles Dickens Esq.' and, on the verso, 'Her Majesty's Theatre 1850', representing a season ticket at the theatre in

Haymarket, London, in 1850 primarily a venue for opera and ballet. £1,250 would buy you a watercolour portrait of Dickens, c1900, by George Sheridan Knowles; a clutch of carte-de-visite photographs of him came at £65–£120.

The main catalogue opens with sections of autograph letters from Dickens (17 items, £1,200–£4,800) and signed cheques (three, each £1,250), most of the letters having been published in the Pilgrim Edition. The most interesting (and expensive) is a draft in connection with his last resignation from the Garrick Club, in 1865, described only as 'recorded' in the Pilgrim Edition – 'A most unusual document: Dickens was clearly exercised by the whole business [his assistant W.H. Wills had been blackballed] and lost his temper – this manuscript shows him admitting "I was wrong". It is also unusual in being a heavily corrected draft, when Dickens was normally a supremely confident letter-writer.' Three books from Dickens's library are included, one of them previously unrecorded – Erasmus Wilson's *On the Management of the Skin* (second edition, 1847), inscribed by the author to Dickens and with his crest bookplate, £3,000; Jarndyce surmise that Wilson was 'possibly moved to send his work to Dickens, on account of Dickens's descriptions of the dermatologically challenged Mrs Skewton in *Dombey and Son*, which was being serialised at the time.' Dickens wrote Wilson a hearty letter of thanks in May 1847. Of the great man's own books the most expensive offered are a first issue of *A Christmas Carol* (1843), £15,000, and, more obscurely, a set of the new edition, 1837–9, of *Sketches by Boz* in original parts, 14

of the 20 complete as originally issued, and with only one plate missing, £16,500.

Moving forward to the 20th century, **Peter Ellis** (peterellisbooks@hotmail.co.uk), 156, 450 items, offered an unusually wide selection of the works of the Orkney poet George Mackay Brown, featuring his first book, *The Storm* (1954), £650, and the tribute volume *Dove-Marks on Stone* (Babel, 1995) produced the year before his death, this one of 25 copies signed by all the contributors, Seamus Heaney and R.S. Thomas among them, and including a postcard from Brown to Kevin Perryman, the publisher, £2,850; three books inscribed by Gertrude Stein to Lord Berners, none in perfect condition, the best *Geography and Plays* (1922), inscribed 'To Gerald and hand in hand we enjoy it all together altogether – with so much affection – Gertrude', £1,500; Osbert Sitwell's *Two Generations* (1940) with two letters from 1940 to Penelope Betjeman, one about going to stay with Sir George Sitwell in Italy ('I don't wish to be interned there with my father for the duration of the war – nor as to that, without him'), £175; a proof of R.S. Thomas's *Young and Old* (1972), the author's own, with manuscripts of 14 of the poems inserted, £3,750; and a group of 16 William Trevor titles inscribed to his friend the poet Peter Porter, £150–£750.

**Blackwell's Rare Books** (rarebooks@blackwell.co.uk), B204, 'Modern Books & Manuscripts', 132 items, had Charles Hamilton Sorley's *Marlborough and other poems* (1916), with four letters from the author's mother to the Sanskrit scholar Mary Ridding, the first written a fortnight after his death at the Battle

of Loos, £4,750; a 'superb' long letter from Keith Douglas in Palestine, December 1941, to David Roberts, his old history master at Christ's Hospital, £5,000 (with other material); Laurie Lee's own copy of his first book, *The Sun My Monument* (1944), its covers damaged by 'flying-bomb blast', £1,500; and a wartime printing of Conan Doyle's *The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard* with the ownership signature of 'Monty', Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, £650.

**David Brass Rare Books** (info@davidbrassrarebooks.com), 'Oh F.....k! It's Fall Already!'; items unnumbered, celebrated 'fabulously fine' books in the Brass idiom, illustrated and extra-illustrated, with Cosway bindings and fore-edge paintings, and original drawings by Robert Cruikshank, Ernest Griset, Linley Sambourne and Arthur Rackham – one by the last particularly fearsome, *'The Lay of St. Aloys' or, Witches and Warlocks, Ghosts Goblins and Ghouls* [1907], in pen, ink and watercolour and executed for *The Ingoldsby Legends*, \$25,000.

**Bennett & Kerr** (bennettkerr@aol.com), 232, 'Medieval History from the Library of Dr Mark Whittow (1957–2017)'; 1532 items, commemorated the Provost elect of Oriel College, Oxford, tragically killed in a car accident on the M40; 233, 827 items, continued the dealers' long-standing series specialising in 'Middle Ages & Renaissance', with fat sections of volumes from the Early English Text and English Place-Name societies.

And **Ash Rare Books** (books@ashrare.com), 127, a miscellany, 65 items, featured two

modern bindings by Kate Holland, £2,500 and £2,000; Tennyson's *Maud* (1855) inscribed to his eccentric sister Matilda, and by her to one Leonora M. Pinwill (Ash suggest this is the 14-year-old Leonora Marian Pinwill, but why should it not be her aunt Leonora Maria, 1819–1867, Matilda's nearer contemporary?), £750; and Jacques Deval's 1930 tease of Anita Loos, . . . *And Blondes Prefer Paris* – with Loos's bookplate, £500.

*Please post catalogues for review to:*

*James Fergusson*  
39 Melrose Gardens  
London W6 7RN

*jamesfergusson@btinternet.com*

# FIRSTS

## HONG KONG

Hong Kong  
Maritime Museum  
6–8 December 2024

# 2024



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## The 2024 ABA *Christmas Party*



**T**hank you to everyone who joined us for the 2023 ABA Christmas party! Many thanks to Thomas Heneage for hosting us in their beautiful temporary space at 27 Regent Street, London, SW1Y 4NQ.

## Fair Report

# Chelsea Rare Book Fair 2023

We were delighted to see so many colleagues, friends, and customers at Chelsea in November. Branded 'the friendliest book fair', Chelsea lived up to its reputation as well as being an especially buzzy edition, with extremely healthy footfall. Thank you to all exhibitors, organisers, and guests who helped create such a lively and welcoming atmosphere.



### EXHIBITOR SALES

1 Sep – 5 Nov 2023 compared to 23 March – 1 May 2022

Advance website sales	£46,505	+139%
Sales to exhibitors	£228,351	-9%
Sales to booksellers	£41,239	+100%
Sales to private customers	£117,508	-10%
<b>Total sales</b>	<b>£492,170</b>	<b>+11.4%</b>
AVERAGE SALE:	<b>£6,225</b>	+2.7%
MEDIAN SALE:	<b>£5,260</b>	+17%
HIGHEST SALE:	<b>£31,000</b>	+12.5%

### WEBSITE ANALYTICS: OVERVIEW

1 Sep – 5 Nov 2023 compared to 23 March – 1 May 2022

2023	2022
<b>6.6k</b>	<b>4.2k</b>
SESSIONS	USERS
+27%	+23%
<b>22k</b>	<b>4.1k</b>
PAGEVIEWS	NEW USERS
+10%	+24%



## FAIR OVERVIEW

2023				2022			
	Fri 3 Nov	Sat 4 Nov	Total		Fri Apr	Sat Apr	Total
Visitors	601	800	1,401*	Visitors	439	633	1,072
Exhibitors	77	77	77	Exhibitors	73	73	73

\*Represents a 31% increase on 2022

## EXHIBITOR FEEDBACK



- Really enjoyed it. Thank you for all the hard work in organising!
- It would be nice first day 6pm. And in the spring – less rain!
- Fantastic fair – so well organised. Thank you!
- Got a bit busy on the first day – maybe more crowd control could be implemented?
- Love the Chelsea fair and meeting up with old friends & new...friendly and professional.
- Only suggestion would be to improve the lighting
- Very buzzy, excellent organisation as always!



A full report is available on request. Please email [secretary@aba.org.uk](mailto:secretary@aba.org.uk)



# *York Antiquarian Book Seminar 2023*





## *YABS 2023*

### *Student Report*

**Stephanie Wynn**

**I**t is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single person in possession of a love for books, must be in want of YABS.

The 2023 York Antiquarian Book Seminar was no less than a feast for the budding book specialist. Set against the glorious backdrop of the historic city of York, the fantastic panel of established booksellers skillfully squeezed several years of biblio-related experience into a brilliant three-and-a-half-day seminar. The faculty generously shared their book-selling knowledge through a healthy mixture of

lectures, discussions, practical sessions, studio visits, book shop tours and pub trips. Their willingness to speak about what they've learnt in their own careers was incredibly refreshing and extremely useful.

Every topic relating to the trade imaginable was covered including what to look for when buying books, how to spot fakes and forgeries, exhibiting at fairs, selling to institutions, practicalities of running a book shop and so much more. It was a rare opportunity to have the chance to get all your questions answered on what it's really like to be in the book trade – and more importantly, how to do it well. A lot of the skills and industry knowledge I acquired from YABS are things that I have found myself using at work every day since. I certainly feel that the seminar enhanced both my specialism and my understanding of the trade.

The seminar attendees were equally as interesting as the seminar itself. Our backgrounds and interests were wonderfully varied covering all levels of experience from students and shop owners to collectors and librarians. Many of my fellow attendees quickly became dear friends - our bonds formed over our shared love of books and we are still in contact with each other today.

A huge thank you and 'bravo' to the faculty and Riley Grant for putting together another fantastic year of YABS. If you want to know what it's really like to be in the book trade and how to make a success of it, then YABS is for you. The only downfall is that you'll be more in love with books and the trade than ever before.

# Upcoming Fairs & Trade Events

## ABA FAIRS & EVENTS

### FIRSTS ONLINE

29 February - 3 May 2024

[firsts-online.com](http://firsts-online.com)

### EDINBURGH RARE BOOK FAIR

22 - 23 March 2024

Location: Radisson Blu Hotel, 80 High Street, Royal Mile, Edinburgh, EH1 1TH

[www.pbfa.org/fairs/edinburgh-premier-book-fair-march-2024](http://www.pbfa.org/fairs/edinburgh-premier-book-fair-march-2024)

### FIRSTS: LONDON'S RARE BOOK FAIR

16 - 19 May 2024

Location: Saatchi Gallery, Duke of York's HQ, King's Rd, London, SW3 4RY

[www.firstslondon.com/](http://www.firstslondon.com/)

### BATH BOOK FAIR

26 - 27 July 2024

Location: Bath Pavilion, N Parade Rd, Bathwick, Bath,

BA2 4EU

[aba.org.uk/aba-bookfairs/bath-book-fair](http://aba.org.uk/aba-bookfairs/bath-book-fair)

### FIRSTS HONG KONG

06 - 08 December 2024

Location: Hong Kong Maritime Museum, 11 Man Kwong St, Central, Hong Kong

Website coming soon!

## TRADE FAIRS & EVENTS

### VENICE ANTIQUARIAN BOOK FAIR

23 - 25 February 2024

Location: Palazzo Pisani Revedin

Campo Manin Venice, Italy

[www.alai.it](http://www.alai.it)

### STOCKHOLM ANTIQUARIAN BOOK FAIR

9 - 10 March 2024

Location: Fredsgatan 12 Stockholm, Sweden

[www.svaf.se](http://www.svaf.se)

### TOKYO INTERNATIONAL ANTIQUARIAN BOOK FAIR

15 - 17 March 2024

Location: Tokyo Traffic Hall

2-10-1, Yurakucho, Chiyoda-ku Tokyo, Japan

[ilab.org/event/tokyo-international-antiquarian-book-fair-1-1](http://ilab.org/event/tokyo-international-antiquarian-book-fair-1-1)

### NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL ANTIQUARIAN BOOK FAIR

04 - 07 April 2024

Location: Park Avenue Armory, 643 Park Avenue, New York, USA

[www.nyantiquarianbookfair.com](http://www.nyantiquarianbookfair.com)

### SALON DU LIVRE RARE & DES ARTS GRAPHIQUES

14 - 16 June 2024

Location: Le Carreau du Temple, 4 rue Eugène Spuller, 75003, Paris, France

[salondulivrerare.paris](http://salondulivrerare.paris)

*Please refer to fair and association websites regularly for the latest information on fair dates and news regarding any changes or cancellations.*

**FRIDAY 26 JULY, 12 NOON – 7PM**  
**SATURDAY 27 JULY, 10AM – 5PM**

*Bath Pavilion, North Parade Road,  
Bathwick, Bath BA2 4EU*

# BATH BOOK FAIR

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**26 – 27 JULY 2024**

BATH PAVILION

£2 ENTRY



## Report

# *2023 Membership Survey*

In autumn of 2023, the ABA invited members to provide feedback on the work of the Association, to help us better understand the needs and priorities of the membership and to improve our service. We are taking steps to act on our findings and provide here an overview of responses.

For more information about the membership survey, please contact [secretary@aba.org.uk](mailto:secretary@aba.org.uk).

### **Communication and output**

- 91% of members engage with the ABA office
- Most members describe their engagement as “occasionally”
- Overall, members feel the office is responsive. 2 responders felt it wasn’t sufficiently responsive.
- 93% members are happy with the bulletin
- 95% of members read the bi-annual newsletter
- 39% of members feel that the newsletter should be printed 61% are neutral/do not feel it’s important to have a printed version
- 35% of members feel the printed list of members is important. 65% are neutral/do not feel it’s important
- 24% of members feel the aba website is helpful, 75% are neutral/don’t find it helpful

### **Suggestions for content to include in the bulletin going forward**

“Less chit chat”

“Perhaps repost all the invitations to apply for international fairs - these remain one of the big bonuses of ABA membership”

“We need some personal info from members & their plight, sorrows, happiness”

### **Suggestions for content to include in the Newsletter going forward**

“Success stories from YABS students”

“It’s up to the members to make the effort to contribute. Encourage the members to write short articles, share ideas, etc.”

“More light hearted pieces, gossip etc, and bits about the wider world of books, and the (strange) interesting people we come across”

“Add a useful tech section.”

“Climate change mitigation for booksellers”

### **Book Fairs**

- 54% of members participated in Firsts, 50% participated in Chelsea, 22% have participated at Edinburgh, 38% participated in Firsts Online
- 49% of members say Chelsea is their favourite fair, 44% say Firsts is their favourite fair
- 17.4% of members feel the ABA needs a new fair. 82.6% felt there was not a need.
- 25.8% of members don't participate in the fairs due to the cost of exhibiting, 25.8% due to difficulty with shipping and logistics

### **Other Activities**

- 52.6% of members would like to participate in a social media seminar, 26.3% would like a photography seminar
- 96% of members feel YABS is a positive addition to the annual calendar, 4% do not

### **Biggest benefits of membership**

59% fairs, 54% membership standards, 54% OCLC, etc.

### **Membership satisfaction**

- 38.7% very satisfied, 22.7% satisfied, 24% neutral, 10.7% unsatisfied, 4% very unsatisfied
- 80.3% of members feel the subscription is good value for money, 19.7% feel it isn't

### **Membership benefits suggestions**

- Group Health Insurance Plan
- Group deals on EEBO/ECCO
- Rare Book Hub Deal
- Book Collector Subscription
- Greater guidance and support of trade and customs

### **Social media suggestions**

- More about members
- More about the ease of visiting bookfairs
- Benefits of buying from ABA members

### **Future Planning**

- Opportunities for younger generations
- Increase profile of the members and bookselling
- Membership forum for key issues like packaging, legalities, import/export, finance
- Emphasis of high standards of membership
- Continue with YABS and Education

## ABA

*Council Minutes***Minutes of meeting of the members of Council***9:30 on 28 September 2023 via Zoom.*

**In Attendance:** Deborah Coltham (President), Daniel Crouch (Treasurer), Stephen Foster, James Hallgate, Pom Harrington, Thomas Heneage, Ed Lake, Tom Lintern-Mole, Ed Maggs, Laura Massey, Sophie Schneideman, Bernard Shapero (Vice President), Sara Trevisan

**Also in attendance:** Rachel Chanter, Riley Grant, Adrian Harrington

**In Memoriam**

Iain Grahame

The council held a minute of silence.

**Minutes of the ABA Council Meeting held on 25 July 2023***Matters arising from the Minutes*

TLM requested an amendment to the Edinburgh Book Fair section.

DCr and SF approved and voted.

**Report of the President**

DCo reported that she had a wonderful trip to the ILAB president's meeting in Stockholm. Her takeaway was what a great position the ABA was in in comparison to other associations. There is membership interest,

YABS, fairs, etc. DCo conducted a presentation on diversity and inclusion. There was a conversation about women networking in the book trade. She felt very positive overall.

**Financial Report**

DCr reported that there had been little change to the bottom line and it was set to be a very small profit at the end of the year. Electricity costs had doubled, and staff training and travel had increased but only due to lack of activity in previous years. RG pointed out that the predicted £6k loss could be offset if all stands at the Chelsea fair were sold. TLM asked if insurance had increased as well, DCr felt this was related to inflation as well as some increased travel.

PH asked if the ABA could use Wise for international transfers, RG stated that the way the association is set up they wouldn't approve them setting up an account but she would try again.

**Book Fairs***Chelsea 2023: 3-4 November 2023*

RG reported on exhibitors and would be encouraging more to sign up in the next two weeks. International sign up was low, and she had sent out an email through ILAB offering free stands for overseas exhibitors exhibiting for the first time.

*Edinburgh: 22-23 March 2024*

RG and RC were keen to make a start on developing the fair but had not had much interaction with the organisers yet.



*Bath 2024*

TLM noted that applications would be open later that day with a stand price fixed at £150.

*Firsts 2024: 16-19 May 2024*

PH reported that the status was mixed. The FT had agreed to support the fair again and had guaranteed two full page ads in the weeks before the fair. There would be tickets going to their 500,000 UK subscribers, and a tour for key subscribers. The contract with the Bodleian and Friends of the Bodleian had been finalised and they were keen to participate. Ticket distribution would go to both the Friends and their main mailing list. PH thanked SS for the introduction. The FT and Bodleian were also mutually pleased with the arrangement and hoped that Richard Ovenden could also write something.

PH, RG and RC had met up with a new ticketing company, ARTsvp about digitising tickets for the fair, which had the advantage of sending automated reminders before the fair, and there would be better statistics of visitors at the front desk. The solution was quite affordable and could be used for more than one event per year.

There was enough clearance with the fairs in New York and Abu Dhabi in 2024 which he hoped would positively impact the exhibitor numbers.

PH had met with Biblio about a renewed sponsorship agreement for £25,000 but their counteroffer was only \$5,000 to sponsor a specific item. PH and RG would be meeting with ABE the following day, though PH was

not confident in securing any financial sponsorship. TLM had organised a meeting with WH Ireland to discuss some form of financial sponsorship.

There was an ongoing debate within the committee regarding the design of fair assets.

DCr asked for copies of the sponsorship and corporate ticketing offer to share with various people.

Action: RG would share these as soon as they had been updated.

*2025-2026*

The organisers were waiting for the contract for the following years.

**Report of the Secretary**

RG reported that she was hopeful for additional Chelsea exhibitors. Organisation for the Book Trade History Conference and YABS were going well. Firsts Online and Firsts London would be launched asap, pending some website development. The Christmas party venue had been confirmed as Thomas Heneage's new premises, which would be confirmed. RG had started the Membership Survey, which would be shared shortly. RG noted that the current ABA Database was becoming somewhat obsolete and was investigating options and would investigate Air Table. Having recently worked on the ABA Stand at the Paris Book Fair, RG reported that one dealer had not had any books on their stand, and asked if it might be worth mentioning to them so they did not do this again, DCo agreed. DCr noted that Sarah

Keefe had investigated the VAT and managed to get a number of refunds for exhibiting ABA members.

### **Marketing and Newsletter Report**

RC reported that she had sent out digital asset for Chelsea, there would also be adverts on Sloane square, and ad in the Telegraph and a half page feature in the FT. There had been about 500 downloads, and the ticket mailout was underway.

The general ABA mailchimp would go out next week.

RC noted that there were a number of cross-promotional agreements set up with international fairs so there would be some promotion of these by the ABA, and Firsts would be promoted at all ILAB fairs. SF suggested asking Graham York or Leo Cadogan for a Madrid connection.

There were 3 ABA Friends visits set up for 2024.

RG also reported that RC had sent out a full newsletter over the summer which had received a positive response.

### **Charities**

DCr reported that there had been no calls on the fund.

### **Educational Trust**

YABS

SS reported that everything was progressing and there will be a full faculty meeting in the coming weeks. SS asked if Council

thought ILAB would consider donating some funds to the course. SF suggested perhaps approaching them when funds were needed rather than immediately. SS also reported that RC would be coming up to talk about social media, TLM suggested recording this. RG and RC would set up something separate as well.

PH had suggested a sponsorship document. RG noted that a proposal had been put together and had been shared.

### **Export and Legislation**

DCr had been sent a suggestion that European dealers could sell their books to any company in the UK to exhibit at ABA, then send back as a return. DCr had tested this and it was completely in line with regulations, but it doesn't apply to those items needing an export license. BS also noted there was no VAT on books in Ireland, Belgium or Denmark.

### **Membership Benefits**

TH felt members should be kept informed about attempted scams and banking fraud. He was working on a dinner for May.

### **Committees and other ABA activities**

#### *Book Collecting Prizes*

DCo reported a slight hiatus but LM and DCo were meeting to discuss entrants for 2023 before expanding to more universities in 2024. SF suggested involving the Bodleian.

#### *Digital Committee*

A small meeting had taken place with TLM, RC and RG. There would be a fuller meeting before Firsts. RG also mentioned they had discussed organising a photography workshop

to take place next summer.

#### *Friends of the ABA*

RC was working on a Christmas welcome pack, and would share this with PH.

#### *Library*

PH noted that the ABA and Breslauer library were packed up and should be ready to move in next summer. The new space would also be able to host the Breslauer Prize and all the book submissions up to 2026, which would save about £1500 in postage per year.

#### *Library Liaison*

ST noted things had been quite quiet, but there was a possibility of organising a fair at the Edinburgh CILIP conference in 2024.

### **Agenda Items proposed by Members of Council and/or Membership**

#### *Hong Kong Book Fair*

DCr reported that the much-loved Hong Kong book fair had died during covid. Quaritch were happy for the ABA to take it over as Firsts Hong Kong, while staying involved as a committee member. This would be set up for November/December 2024 and would be a potential new revenue stream. DCr proposed the Maritime Museum as the venue. PH supported the venture. DCr noted that he would like a steering committee with a Firsts Hong Kong committee, and also noted that the Japanese and Korean associations would also be interested in collaborating. PH asked if this would become an ILAB fair and DCr and RG felt it should be. SS was happy to volunteer. SF noted that Chris Bailey, the current ILAB Treasurer, was ex Hong Kong and could be a

potential option. BS noted the Art in Asia fair would provide space for ABA members though the timing was not great as it was taking place in October.

A vote was taken: Unanimously in favour to proceed with planning Firsts Hong Kong 2024.

#### *Sale Catalogues in Bulletin*

There had been a complaint received about members sending out a sale catalogue in the ABA bulletin, and it was felt the ABA should not be promoting them as they go against the expertise stated in the Articles of Association. The Council members did not think this was an issue.

#### *Early Careers Initiative*

DCo wondered if there was any funding for a few Early Careers events. DCr suggested tying in with the Arts Association as they were supported by the Arts Scholars guild and the Courtauld.

### **Any Other Business**

PH reported that ILAB had joined the EU Art Consultant Board, which would hold three meetings a year to consult on Arts Legislation.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12:30

## Minutes of the meeting of the members of the Council

*14:00 Thursday 7 December 2023  
at the ABA Office, First Floor, 21 John Street,  
London WC1N 2BF*

**In Attendance:** Deborah Coltham (President), Daniel Crouch (Treasurer), Stephen Foster, James Hallgate, Pom Harrington, Thomas Heneage, Tom Lintern-Mole, Ed Maggs, Sophie Schneideman, Bernard Shapero (Vice President), Sara Trevisan

**Also in attendance:** Rachel Chanter, Riley Grant, Adrian Harrington

**Apologies for absence:** Laura Massey, Ed Lake

### Minutes of the ABA Council Meeting held on 28 September 2023

The minutes were approved, except for one amendment to be made, which was that Denmark does have VAT.

Approval of the minutes was proposed by Stephen Foster and seconded by Tom Lintern-Mole.

### Report of the President

DCo reported that YABS was very impressive, and it was encouraging to see so many engaged future dealers.

### Financial Report

DCr reported that Firsts Online had brought the year end into the black, and Firsts Hong

Kong would provide a healthy surplus for 2024 with large stands priced at £6,000.

### Book Fairs

#### *Edinburgh*

The Edinburgh book fair would be taking place 22-23 March 2024. The organisers were suggesting pricing it at £168 for PBFA and £250 for ABA members to bring the fair to a breakeven point. RG noted that applications would be opened in the following week.

#### *Bath 2024*

TLM reported that 80 exhibitors had signed up thus far.

#### *Firsts 2024*

PH reported that the fair would take place between the 16-19 May 2024. 60 exhibitors had signed up at the time of the meeting. Sponsorship had been confirmed from the FT, the Bodleian, ABE and Biblio. The headline sponsorship had been offered to Partners&Co for £25,000. ABE had agreed to contribute £7,500 and would also support with social media and marketing in return for a one-hour slot to present their offering to exhibitors; coffee and pastries would be provided.

ARTSVP would be trialled for sending out e-tickets, including reminders and scannable QR codes. There would be fewer tickets printed, but these would still be used for the preview. There would be more promotion of the shared exhibitor van for shipping.

A commitment had been made for 2025 and 2026 with the preferred May dates. PH noted that from a cashflow perspective, pre-

payments had been made towards the 2024 fair with a significant portion already paid.

#### *Chelsea 2024*

RG reported that the next fair would take place between the 1-2 November 2024. The 2023 fair had yielded a surplus of £15,000, though no administration fee had been applied to this. The committee needed a reshuffle and elements of the fair were starting to look tired. RG noted that new tablecloths could be ordered, preferably black with the ABA logo. There would be a discussions about stand signs, shelving, lighting in the corners and allowing glass cases to improve the overall look of the fair.

#### *Hong Kong 2024*

RG reported that the venue had been confirmed for the 6-8 December. The proposed name was Firsts Hong Kong, keeping with the Firsts brand. The dates worked within the international calendar, and it was a great venue, with potential for expansion into the long hall. There would be a social media advisor and Cantonese translator, to assist in promotional development. The council discussed the possibility of involving the FT in Hong Kong and PH noted we would talk the contact there. The organisers would ask the insurance provider about the political situation.

### **Report of the Secretary**

RG reported that she was working on the event schedule for 2024, finalising the annual report and working on the AGM.

### **Marketing and Newsletter Report**

RG reported that RC had been doing extremely

well with marketing, and her social media lecture from YABS would be turned into an online resource for members. There would be a newsletter published in the New Year.

### **Charities**

#### *Benevolent Fund*

RG reported that the trustee meeting would be taking place in February. A donation of £6,000 had been received from the estate of Judith Hodgson.

#### *Educational Trust*

RG reported that the last meeting had been in October, mainly about trustees and YABS. It had been a successful year overall. SS reported that YABS had been successful resulting in 7 sign-ups for the PBFA. It was proving to be a positive collaboration for the ABA, and generous donations meant that more scholarships could be offered, as well as an expansion of the program.

#### *Export and Legislation*

DCr reported a situation with the Arts Council to do with the values declared on import and those declared on export, which went against the principles of doing business.

Another issue had come up about ABE VAT registration being required in Europe if sales exceeded €7,500. PH flagged that legislation in the US would also become problematic if sales of over \$500,000 were made in one US state in a year. DCo suggested running a seminar with general advice on referring members to the correct departments and giving some general guidance on common issues. The council agreed that they were not in a position to

provide advice, but rather guidance.

### **Membership Benefits**

Dco reported that a few members had asked for discounts for ECCO and EBBO.

Action: RG to look into this.

### **Committees and other ABA activities**

#### *Book Collecting Prizes*

Dco reported that Judging would be taking place the following week, and it would be promoted more in January.

#### *Digital Committee*

TLM reported that a meeting would be taking place in January.

#### *Library*

PH reported that the ILAB Breslauer Prize submissions would be stored there once complete and set up. There would be a catalogue made of the full library and the prize submissions.

#### *Friends of the ABA*

RG reported that welcome packs had been received and the gift membership program would be opened in the following days.

#### *Social Events*

TH would look into reserving Brooks's for 2025 and 2026 before Firsts, and on the 31 October 2024 before Chelsea.

#### *Trade Liaisons*

##### **BAMF**

RG reported that there had been a BAMF meeting in October, and she had circulated the

minutes of the meeting to council.

#### *PBFA*

TLM reported that Mark Skipper to replace John Morten on the ABA/PBFA Liaison committee

### **Agenda Items proposed by Members of Council and/or Membership**

PH advised that it was circulating that books were going to be brought into the scope for AML legislation in the EU in 2025, potentially for sales over €5,000.

BL had asked about the price increases from Caladex. PH would arrange a meeting about shipping rates with Caladex but noted that a monopoly position cuts both ways, and putting Firsts on without them would result in bigger issues.

### **Any Other Business**

RG would buy a speaker and microphone system for future hybrid meetings.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 17:25.

## *Upcoming ABA Meetings 2024*

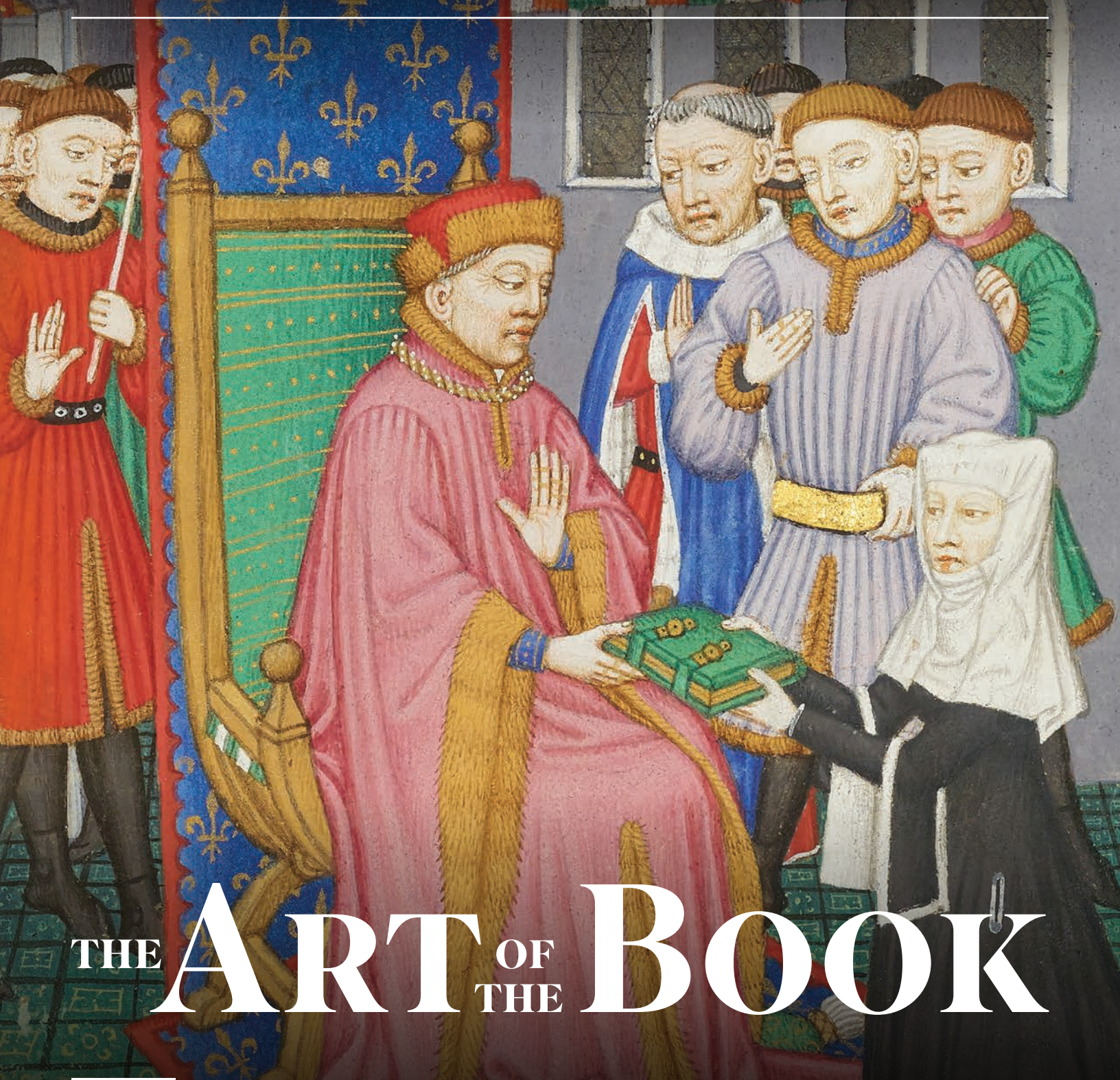
AGM and Council Meeting - Edinburgh	21 March, 15:00 - 17:00 Radisson Blu Hotel, 80 High Street, The Royal Mile, Edinburgh, EH1 1TH
Council meeting	30 May, 14:30 Zoom
Council Meeting	1 August, 14:30 Zoom
Council Meeting	26 September, 14:30 Zoom
Council Meeting & ABA Christmas Party	11 December, 14:30 ABA Office, 21 John Street, London, WC1N 2BF Followed by Christmas party, location TBC

# FIRSTS

LONDON'S RARE BOOK FAIR

Saatchi Gallery

16–19 May 2024



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FTWeekend

Court writer Christine de Pisan presenting her book to Jean, Duc de Berry. Christine de Pisan, *Épître d'Othéa*, 1450, Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, MS. Laud. Misc. 570.