An American in London, Part II

by Gordon Hollis & Kate Fultz Hollis

In November 2006 I wrote an article about exhibiting at London’s ABA Chelsea Book fair. Feeling that the market for books was healthy in England, I decided to exhibit at the London Book fair this June 7 though June 9. Here is a review for ABAA members of our experience at Olympia.

The London Antiquarian Book Fair, Olympia 2007, is one of the ILAB’s most important book fairs, bringing together important dealers from England, Canada, Australia, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Sweden, and also those from Argentina, and South Africa. Only nine American firms exhibited, a reduced number which reflects the current problems we have with our European export and import marketplace.

The emphasis at the London Book Fair was on 19th & 20th century books and fine bindings, as it is industry wide, with an added deep representation of travel, English literature, and historic first editions. Not surprisingly, there were numerous modern first edition dealers but fewer than in past years. There were a few pure antiquarians to be found, including the hardy Jeff Mancevice, (but not Chris Sokol nor Hosea Baskin) and great firms like Quaritch and Maggs brought a bit of everything wonderful. There was also a noticeable presence of decorative print sellers including Grosvenor and Quadrille.

Visitors to London’s book fair are of

Booksellers' Showcase and RBMS Preconference a Success

by Sarah Baldwin

The 48th Annual RBMS Preconference in Baltimore dawned early Tuesday, June 19th. Entirely too early for me since I had to be at the Edinburgh Hall at 6am, prior to the arrival of those participating in the Southeast Chapter’s Booksellers’ Showcase. John Hellebrand of Palinurus appeared within minutes and so did Bill Stewart of Vamp & Tramp. By 9am 24 booksellers, from California, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York and Pennsylvania, as well as from the Southeast Chapter, had set up their booths. The showcase, complete with signs for each exhibitor displaying the ABAA and ILAB logos, was in place. But would librarians attending the Preconference come? The showcase shared quarters with Preconference registration so it would be easy for attendees to register and then spend time looking. It worked. Librarians from Cornell, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, the Library of Congress, the Lilly, University of Michigan, University of California

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ILAB Book Fairs

**2007**

**September 7-9**
Oslo, Norway
Håndverkeren Kurs og Konferensesenter

**September 14-16**
Brussels, Belgium
Centre for Fine Arts

**September 28-30**
Sydney, AUS (ANZAAB)
The State Library of New South Wales

**October 25-27**
Amsterdam, The Netherlands (NVvA)
Passenger Terminal

**November 2 & 3**
London, UK (ABA)
Old Chelsea Town Hall

**November 16-18**
Boston, MA (ABAA)
Hynes Convention Center

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**2008**

**February 15-17**
Los Angeles, CA (ABAA)
Hyatt Regency Century Plaza

For a calendar including non-ILAB book fairs, visit www.abaa.org

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Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair

**November 16-18, 2007**

The 2007 Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair, one of the oldest and most respected antiquarian book shows in the country, celebrates more than thirty years, from November 16-18, 2007 at Boston's Hynes Convention Center. Rare booksellers and dealers will gather to exhibit and sell rare, collectible, and antiquarian books, modern first editions, manuscripts, autographs, maps, and a plethora of other literary ephemera. Dealers of fine and decorative prints will feature fine prints and drawings.

**Hours**
- Friday 5pm-9pm
- Saturday noon-7pm
- Sunday noon-5pm

**Tickets**
- Friday: $15 (good for three days)
- Saturday, Sunday: $8 each day

For more info, visit bostonbookfair.com or call (617) 266-6540.

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This Issue's Contributors

**Sarah Baldwin** is the proprietor of E. Wharton & Co. and serves on the ABAA’s Board in many capacities. She is the Secretary of the Association and serves as the Chair of several committees including the RBMS Committee.

**John Crichton** is the proprietor of the Brick Row Book Shop. As recent past President of the Association, John also serves as the Trustee of the Benevolent Fund.

**Gordon Hollis** was the Chair of the Southern California Chapter and proprietor of Golden Legend. His wife Kate is a Senior Researcher at the UCLA Geffen School of Medicine.

**Rob Rulon-Miller** was Newsletter Editor for many years and deals in rare, fine, and interesting books in many fields.

**Correction**
The Editor made a grammatical error in Bruce Barnett's cover story in the Spring issue. The title should have read: *So You Think You're an Appraiser! How the New Rules Affect You.*
A Conversation with Michael von der Linn of The Lawbook Exchange, Ltd.

Reprinted with permission from A Legal Miscellanea, the newsletter of the Friends of the Jacob Burns Law Library of The George Washington University, Washington, DC. With thanks to Jennie Meade.

Blending erudition and a connoisseur’s eye with a keen understanding of the antiquarian book trade, Michael von der Linn is one of the bookselling profession’s most accomplished members. As Manager of the Antiquarian Book Department at The Lawbook Exchange, Ltd., which specializes in all aspects of law and legal history, Michael’s many responsibilities include describing books for sale, composing the catalogues in which they appear, finding books for resale, and choosing titles for reprinting. Michael graciously agreed to share with us his thoughts on the art and business of handling rare law books.

A Legal Miscellanea: Tell us how you approach the process of describing a rare book.

Michael von der Linn: It is necessary to strike a balance between scholarship and salesmanship when describing an item’s physical condition. Above all, I must be sure that it is authentic and complete, and to account for any modifications it may have acquired over time. I also need to describe its condition accurately. Since I need someone to buy it, I am compelled to choose my words carefully. As a rule, I am critical when I describe an item so a buyer will be pleasantly surprised when it is a better-looking book than expected.

Why are rare law books important?

Antiquarian law books are not interesting just because they are old. They are interesting because they enable us to trace the law’s development and preserve information that might be forgotten otherwise. They can also inform later developments. Let me give you an example. For years, materials relating to the status of civilians under military law from the time of the American Civil War had purely historical interest. But it is timely today in debates about civil liberties and enemy combatants in the Global War on Terror. Ultimately, old books are important because they contain information that may be important in the future. Collecting them preserves a body of knowledge that is more vulnerable than most people assume, despite the existence of reprint programs and electronic media.

Why is reprinting classic legal texts important?

It is remarkable how many important books have never been reprinted and are scarce today. As sellers of old and rare books we are keenly aware of this situation. In many cases our reprints have original introductions or additional information, such as a reprint of a related text. To return to the previous question, we hope our reprints will preserve legal history, enhance scholarship, and enrich debate.

How do you determine what to reprint?

We look for historic and unjustly forgotten titles that are difficult to find. Our interests, awareness of current affairs, and knowledge of the field guides us in most cases, but many projects are initiated by suggestions. We actively solicit reprint requests at conferences and through our website. Several projects have resulted from suggestions.

What are some examples of exceptional works you have handled?

Some items I have enjoyed working with are first editions of Bracton, Cowell’s Interpreter, and Story’s Commentaries on the Constitution. I have especially fond memories of the following:

• An extensive archive of legal papers of George Washington Strong, one of the most prominent lawyers in early nineteenth-century New York and a founder of the firm that evolved into Cadwalader, Wickersham, and Taft. Organizing this archive was quite a challenge;
• A printing of the Liber Sextus Decretalium (a book of the Corpus Juris Canonici) from 1485. This was the first incunable I handled. The experience felt like a rite of passage;
• A copy of Darrow’s Farmington inscribed to Anita Loos (Emerson), the author of Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1925). I loved its inscription: “To Anita Loos Emerson with the best wishes of her/friend/Clarence Darrow/Detroit/May 1st-1926/It may be that gentlemen prefer blondes but I Don’t-/C.S.D. ”

How do you find books to sell?

Our inventory comes from a variety of sources. The most important are local and international auctions, offers from individuals, and offers from book dealers. We also work with book scouts. They do a wonderful job of finding titles in dusty provincial bookshops, antique shops, and other places that are not involved with the internet or the mainstream book world. We even find items occasionally on eBay.

What methods do you use for appraising books?

Online bookselling sites like the Advanced Book Exchange (ABE) and greater public participation in auctions has created an unprecedented degree of transparency in the antiquarian book market. In the past a book’s price was determined by the bookseller’s sense of the market, scarcity, and intrinsic value. (The main sources of information were book fairs, auctions, and data collected in such publications as the National Union Catalogue (NUC), The AB Bookman’s Weekly, and American Book Prices Current.) As one would expect, this situation changed dramatically with the advent of the internet databases and online book-selling. A visit to OCLC or KVK will

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von der Linn

give you a rough idea of a title’s scarcity. Checking a title on a site like ABE or AddAll will show you, in a matter of seconds, how many copies are on the market and what other dealers think it is worth. The nature of these sites compels me to price my books competitively. Indeed, I check the price of my items against the internet before I issue a catalogue. Many are rare or unique, however, and I may have an item with unique characteristics, such as an interesting association or an especially attractive binding. In cases such as these, my knowledge and experience will determine the price. My ideal is to find something that does not appear on the Internet.

How did you learn to do what you do?
Like many, if not most, antiquarian booksellers, I learned a great deal on the job. My only specific training was a seminar on the bibliography of early Anglo-American law taught at the University of Virginia Rare Book School. However, my education, scholarly interests, and prior work experience provided a solid foundation for what I do today. My background is in intellectual history and musicology, which I studied at Bard College and Columbia University, where I earned a Ph.D. I was also active as a college teacher and scholar for a few years. My training and research were grounded deeply in the history of ideas. Musicology taught me how to interpret cultural artifacts. And my work with early printed music and music books helped me to appreciate the significance of texts as physical objects. Seminars in the medieval and Renaissance music also acquainted me with the characteristics of European manuscripts and early printed books (as well as the confusing subject of Latin abbreviations). More generally, my training as a graduate student involved classes in descriptive bibliography, languages, research, writing, and critical analysis. All of these play a role in my work today.

Any parting words on the subject of bookselling?
Since it is much easier to find books today the booksellers must realize that they are providing a service. In the past booksellers dominated the market and controlled access to books. Today consumers use channels that were mostly limited to the trade. Consumers also have new avenues like eBay and online bookelling. In the wake of these changes booksellers contribute to the market by expediting the process of finding, evaluating, and describing items. Their expertise and connoisseurship also prevent costly and time-consuming mistakes. Though commercially motivated, their work plays a crucial role in the transmission of knowledge.

The Lawbook Exchange, Ltd. may be found on the web at lawbookexchange.com

Bibliographical Society of America hosts successful Conference

by Annie Mazes

The Antiquarian Booksellers’ Association of America recently helped fund the Birth of the Bestseller conference held in New York by the Bibliographical Society of America. The conference consisted of three days of talks and presentations that explored 19th-century bestsellers and how they came to be so widely revered. With the rise of literacy and readership among the masses, new printing technology, and marketing, this was a time of major changes.

In June 2006 the Society received multiple proposals for suggested speech topics, ranging from “The True Birth of the Best Seller” to “The Invention of the Comic Book,” of which thirteen were chosen. In addition, the organization invited experts to speak at the plenary session and had two curators present a selection of Gustave Doré Bibles at the Museum of Biblical Art. Alice Beckwith, a guest curator, was also asked to lead the registrants through a private viewing of the Grolier Club’s exhibition Illustrating the Good Life: The Pissarros’ Eragny Press, 1894-1914.

Upon publicizing the event the BSA received an overwhelming number of responses and were forced to cap off their acceptances at 166 registrants. The BSA’s Planning Committee, chaired by Mark Samuels Lasner, had intended to draw an audience already familiar with subject matter. Nonetheless, the organization was amazed and delighted at the interest of so many who shared the desire to know how and why changes occurred so rapidly and drastically in the course of 19th-century literature.

In addition to the exhibitions at the Grolier Club and Museum of Biblical Art, the Morgan Library and Museum hosted an exhibition entitled Victorian Bestsellers and New York University’s Fales Library launched Nothing New: The Persistence of the Bestseller.

Five distinguished speakers: John Sutherland, Marie E. Korey, Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, Michael Winship, and Margaret D. Stetz, were warmly received.

The execution of the conference went off successfully and word of mouth feedback, as well as emails, flooded in praising the BSA for holding the informative and interesting event. The ABAA received praise and thanks in all of the publications, and looks forward to continual collaborations with the Bibliographical Society of America.

The Society will host another conference in three year’s time. In addition, their annual meeting on January 25, 2008 will include a lecture and papers from new scholars.
Baldwin

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(various), University of Washington and elsewhere came through the showcase. The Chapter, thanks to Tucker Respess, had a laptop with internet access available for librarians to check holdings, and many took advantage of the opportunity to make immediate purchases. While there was a slight lull around noon, the showcase otherwise had constant visitors, many still looking, buying and talking with booksellers as 5pm and the end of the showcase neared.

Then Mary Gilliam, Bruce McKittrick and other exhibitors joined John Crichton, Howard Rootenberg and other ABAA members in attending the opening night reception at the Peabody Library. By custom, the ABAA contributes to the cost of the reception and Association members are welcomed. The space was beautiful and the atmosphere convivial. I confess I can only report this second-hand, since I decided I needed to rehearse delivery of a short discussion of “What Is the ABAA?” given the next morning.

The Preconference, entitled, “From Here to Ephemerality: Fugitive Sources in Libraries, Archives, and Museums,” began each morning with two plenary sessions, followed by two sessions of three seminars each in the afternoons. Usually, some 300 register; this year, the Preconference was oversubscribed with 320 signed up for the entire Preconference and an unknown number of additional people registered for individual days. Michael Twyman, of the Centre for Ephemera Studies at the University of Reading, delivered a brilliant keynote address to open the Preconference. He argued that ephemera constitutes a major portion of printing from the 18th century through the present — ephemera which often captures vernacular speech, reflects contemporary, social and cultural mores and frequently introduces printing innovations that only subsequently are adapted for books. To ignore ephemera is to distort printing history and discount significant original documents.

Professor Jay Solomon of the University of Illinois at Urbana, under the rubric, “Scholarly Uses of Ephemera” discussed his collection of various editions of, and ephemera related to, Lew Wallace’s BEN HUR. Did you know that Avon offered a Ben Hur perfume? Or that there was Ben Hur flour, a Ben Hur bicycle, and a flotilla of other products? Solomon saw the BEN HUR phenomena as the first time businesses consciously adopted a cultural icon to sell a product — a practice now so common as to verge on the inevitable. Other sessions were equally apt and fascinating: Cheryl Grant of the Smithsonian talked about the 1933 World’s Fair (oh, that Sally Rand, fan dancer extraordinaire), Rebecca Federman, Jessy Randall and Nina Nazionale discussed culinary ephemera.

ABAA members Diane DeBlois and Robert Dalton Harris of aGatherin’ and David Margolis and Jean Moss spoke on “The Dealer’s
Baldwin  
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Contribution.” The four offered a sound account of what booksellers do, how material may come to them, how they conduct research, catalogue items and place them in historical context, services they offer clientele (institutional and private), and ways in which they assist in the preservation and interpretation of ephemera. All topics were illustrated with examples. First, of course, a bookseller must succumb to the allure of ephemera. Jean recalled coming across a 19th century theatrical broadside for a performance of A Winter’s Tale with the great Charles Kean. Also on the bill was Ellen Terry, at age nine, in her first role at the West End. How could one resist? More formidable is a collection they are amassing on tourism in Mexico encompassing vacation brochures, hotel promotions, menus, crate labels and a variety of other ephemera. When they have completed the collection, Moss and Margolis believe it will document significant cultural, economic, social and historical aspects of Mexico and its relationship to the United States. Similar, is putting together a collection on ‘the Atomic Age’ — which surely will reflect a sobering assessment. The above, of course, only briefly touches upon the topics under discussion at the Preconference. Additionally, when not attending plenary sessions or seminars, one could enjoy the Walters Art Gallery or venture to the Visionary Art Museum to see its extraordinary outsider art collection or catch up with a librarian for lunch.

It was a terrific Preconference and the Booksellers’ Showcase proved an excellent starter. RBMS would like the ABAA to continue to organize bookseller showcases for future preconferences, and very likely Howard Rootenberg, with other Southern California Chapter members, will organize one for the 2008 Preconference at the Getty in Los Angeles. Mark your calendars: the 2008 Preconference, which focuses on digitalization, will be Tuesday, June 24 through Friday, June 27. The 2009 Preconference will travel to Charlottesville and celebrate the 50th anniversary of RBMS. ABAA members, by the way, can join the American Library Association as an associate member for $50.00 yearly at ala.org; they can register for preconferences whether ALA members or not. E.C. Schroeder, whose tenure as RBMS Chair just wound up, and Christian DuPont, whose tenure as Chair is just beginning, appreciate donations from the ABAA as an organization and from members as individuals. They make a difference, and often prove fruitful for those ABAA donors who have catalogues or lists distributed. The collaboration on the “Your Old Books” pamphlet now available with both the RBMS and ABAA imprints, the success of this year’s Booksellers’ Showcase, and the participation of ABAA members in the Preconference as speakers, reflects the long-term commitment of RBMS and ABAA to encourage interaction between librarians and booksellers as rare book professionals with differing perspectives but much to share.

Hollis  
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two types: those familiar faces who travel the book fair circuits in London, Paris, New York and California: mostly dealers and dedicated collectors. Secondly, we saw a very sophisticated audience of English collectors, mostly middle-aged although some younger faces appeared, confirming that young people are in fact coming into the European book collecting market. These collectors have obviously grown up around antiquarian books which have always been available through shops, visible in library exhibits and understandable through articles and columns in newspapers. It was a wonderful challenge to discuss books with astute collectors who can match wits on issue points and past values.

The Olympia 2 book fair venue in Hammersmith is fairly inconvenient for everyone. To get there, one must take a taxi or use the spotty tube service from Kensington High Street. We stayed in Chelsea near Old Brompton Road, which was almost two miles away. There are hotels very close to the book fair but to my mind the Hammersmith area is to the West End as Culver City is to Beverly Hills: unloved, uninspired, unattractive overall. Although the move away from

Content buyers display their purchases.

photo credit: Marianne Harwood

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interested in our books. Being one of only nine Americans to exhibit, however, indicated that the going would not be so easy. Tastes for rare books in England have turned inward toward its own rich printing history and eastwards, toward travels about the Middle East and China. Moreover, with the ability of collectors to access auctions worldwide via the Web, Americans cannot easily export books from our auctions which English collectors can buy themselves.

The exchange rate made book buying simply murder. Any lot at auction has a 20% buyers premium. Not only that, the entire book-collecting world has access to rare book sales and shops in England. Russian and Chinese buyers are now routine bidders at English auctions. Christie’s has made it extremely easy to bid via an Internet video hook-up which puts bidders from around the world in a virtual auction room, with the auctioneer registering each bid in real time.

By far, the bigger obstacle for Americans buyers is the splendid health of the English book market itself, which reflects the booming English economy. This growth can be witnessed - most vividly - by the new Whole Foods market on Kensington High Street (the opening of which was even noted by Wikipedia), the huge number of luxury Land Rovers clogging the narrow streets, and the astounding rent prices (£3000 to £4000 a month is not uncommon in the fashionable parts of town). A most depressing aspect of progress is the up-scaling of once dodgy King’s Road, with its green grocers, record shops and legendary “goth” styles now mutated into a boutique row of specialty shops, many selling frilly fashions for the favored newborn.

If there is any good news in the weak dollar, it is -- perversely -- the weak American import market itself. The realities of the exchange rate have come home to the English and European dealers who in the last years have found their strong American buyers severely weakened by a dollar which has lost 25% of its recent value. Many English dealers who have counted on a strong American clientele were happy to negotiate prices downward rather than let books remain unsold.

The opening night was well attended, so much so that the crowd reminded one of the West End book fair of pre-Olympia days, when one could not get down the stairs of the Park Lane Hotel. The traffic continued throughout the three day fair, in spite of tube closures and pleasant weather. The “buoyancy” of the crowd did not necessarily translate into sales, since the “buzz” from the dealers was a

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Hollis

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bit subdued.

As far as booth organization, the
English book fair association seems to
believe that dealers with the most money
are entitled to the highest visibility. Thus
the “Superlux” £4500 large 16 meter
booths were located directly in front on
the book fair entrance, forming an imposing
phalanx of great books and English
literature.

An officer of the ABA informed me
that the book fair needed to ensure an
attractive first impression by placing the
best dealers at the front (no matter how
slovenly things might be at the edges,
I assume). To me, it is a strange notion
that a rare book association priding itself
on pedigree, taste and scholarship could
believe that excellence will be found in
the simple ability to buy it. Overall, we
were very happy to be stuck in a far cor-
ner sharing with the Designer Bookbinder
Guild, since 108 booths can be navigated
in a single visit.

We, in both the Northern and Southern
California chapters, have abandoned the
“premium” booth system in our book
fairs, in favor of a strict lottery system
with large and small booths arranged at
random throughout the book fair. Speak-
ing for myself, I feel that all members of
the ILAB have an equal right to present
themselves before the public. Money
should not buy prominence when the
ILAB’s reputation has been formed by
booksellers from all walks of life.

While the London Book Fair offers
many challenges, the travel is exciting
and the networking is ultimately worth a
great deal. England has such a rich his-
tory of printing that it remains possible
to find books that are extremely saleable.
While expectations should not be too
great, those who exhibit at the London
Book Fair have much to gain.

Grolier Club celebrates Anniversary of Boston Athenæum with Exhibit

In celebration of the 2007 bicentennial of
the Boston Athenæum, the Grolier Club
will present an exhibition tracing its dis-
tinguished history from its founding as a
literary society and subscription library in
1807 to the present day. Acquired Tastes: 200 Years of Collecting for the Boston Athenæum will emphasize the great range
of objects—books, paintings, sculpt-
tures, engravings, maps, photographs,
manuscripts, decorative arts, curios, and
artifacts—that have been collected by the
Athenæum over two centuries in order to
create a unique inspirational environment
for study and intellectual exchange.

From its founding in 1807, the Boston
Athenæum’s primary mission has been
to provide a suitable location for serious
study, discussion, and debate of all topics
of interest to the enquiring mind. In the
Enlightenment of the late eighteenth and
early nineteenth centuries—the historic
period which saw the founding of the
Boston Athenæum and similar organiza-
tions—it was believed that intellectual
endeavors more easily germinate and
thrive in an atmosphere that is spacious,
comfortable, quiet, and aesthetically
pleasing. This required books, of course,
but also objects of antiquarian, botanical,
biological, anatomical, and anthropologi-
cal interest. In this setting, fine examples
of paintings, sculptures, drawings, and
engravings fulfilled their traditional
purposes of education and inspiration
and—together with those from the world
of science—stimulated imaginations,
improved morals, and refined aesthetic
tastes.

A careful selection from the institu-
tion’s historic holdings will make up the
bulk of the exhibition. In the fine arts,
this will include sculptures by Thomas
Crawford, Horatio Greenough, and Jean-
Antoine Houdon; paintings by Asher
Brown Durand, John Singer Sargent, Flo-
rine Stettheimer, Gilbert Stuart, Thomas
Sully, and Polly Thayer; prints by Win-
slow Homer, Fitz Henry Lane, and Paul
Revere; and photographs by Matthew
Brady, Abelardo Morell, and Eadweard
Muybridge. Other treasures that were
once part of the Athenæum’s collections,
including paintings by American artists
Washington Allston, Albert Bierstadt,
Rembrandt Peale, John Trumbull, and
Benjamin West, are being generously
lent to the exhibition by the Metropoli-
tan Museum of Art, New York, and the
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, among
others. In this way, the fascinating story
of the Boston Athenæum, its history, and
the growth of its collections, will be told
in its entirety.

In a lavish catalogue that will accom-
pany the exhibition, the history of the
Boston Athenæum and the story of its
collections will be compared with those
of other, similar organizations such as
the Providence Athenæum, the Redwood
Library and Athenæum, the Wadsworth
Athenæum, and the Pennsylvania Acad-
emy of the Fine Arts. This tale of taste
will be placed within the larger contexts
of the cultural history of the United States
and the international movement known as
the Enlightenment.

The fully illustrated catalogue, fea-
turing essays by the exhibition’s cura-
tors, Stanley Cushing, Curator of Rare
Books at the Boston Athenæum, and
David Dearinger, the institution’s Susan
Morse Hilles Curator of Paintings and
Sculpture., will be available at the Club,
and from The Veatchs Arts of the Book,
PO Box 328, Northampton, MA 01060;
phone: (413) 584-1867; fax: (413) 584-
2751; e-mail: veatchs@veatchs.com.

Location and times: Acquired Tastes:
200 Years of Collecting for the Boston
Athenæum will be on view at the Grolier
Club from Sept. 12 – Nov. 24, 2007. For
more information call the Grolier Club at
(212) 838-6690.
Safeguard your business
Michals Insurance is proud to provide exceptional fine art insurance to members of the Antiquarian Booksellers’ Association of America, Inc.
With more than 40 years of experience, our international fine art insurance division is devoted to protecting owners of fine arts and antiquities against financial loss.

Comprehensive coverage
Because of the unique source of their value, rare books require sophisticated and specialized coverage. In addition to broad, all-risk coverage while stock is at your location, we can design protection for:

- Items in shipment to you or your customers, or on display at exhibitions, fairs and shows, anywhere in the world
- Domestic and international coverage under one policy
- Goods of others in your care, custody, and control
- Earthquake or flood losses
- Office contents, computer equipment and other assets

For a complimentary analysis of your insurance needs, contact:

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tel 617.924.1100 • fax 617.926.2162
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www.michalsinsurance.com
ABAA Benevolent Fund & Woodburn Fund

A contribution to the ABAA Benevolent Fund or to the Elisabeth Woodburn Memorial Fund is a meaningful way to honor the memory of a departed colleague. A contribution can also be a thoughtful celebration of an important event in the life of an antiquarian bookseller—a birthday, an anniversary, or a retirement.

Your help is greatly appreciated.

The Antiquarian Booksellers' Benevolent Fund is a non-profit charity fund established by the ABAA in 1952 to benefit any antiquarian bookseller in time of personal need. The Elisabeth Woodburn Memorial Fund offers financial assistance for education and scholarly research relevant to the antiquarian book trade.

Direct your contributions and inquiries to:
Antiquarian Booksellers’ Association of America
20 West 44th Street
Fourth Floor
New York, NY 10036

Benevolent Fund Pledge Sheet

Help us boost the ABAA’s Benevolent Fund! Your pledge will help raise money for scholarships and booksellers in need and is tax deductible.

Simply let us know what you would like to donate and we will send you an invoice. Your support is much appreciated.

Sincerely,

John Crichton, David Lilburne, and Ken Lopez
Trustees of the Benevolent Fund

I wish to pledge $____________________
Firm Name __________________________ Contact Name __________________________
Address ________________________________________________________________

Please return to Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of America, 20 West 44th Street, New York, NY 10036
John Carter Brown Library offers Fellowships

The John Carter Brown Library will award approximately thirty Research Fellowships for the year June 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009. Sponsorship of research at the John Carter Brown Library is reserved exclusively for scholars whose work is centered on the colonial history of the Americas, North and South, including all aspects of the European, African, and Native American involvement.

Fellowships are of two types:

Short-Term Fellowships

Regular John Carter Brown Library Fellowships are available for periods of two to four months and carry a stipend of $2,000 per month. These Fellowships are open to Americans and foreign nationals who are engaged in pre- or post-doctoral, or independent, research. Graduate students must have passed their preliminary or general examinations at the time of application.

The stipends of many of the Fellows each year are paid out of restricted funds generously donated to the Library for this purpose:

• The Paul W. McQuillen Memorial Fellowship, the Alice E. Adams Fellowship, the Charles H. Watts Memorial Fellowship, the Barbara S. Mosbacher Fellowship, the Helen Watson Buckner Memorial Fellowship, the Norman Fiering Fund, and the Library Associates Fellowship are open to scholars in any area of research related to the Library’s holdings.

• The Jeannette D. Black Memorial Fellowship is for research in the history of cartography or a closely related area.

• The William Reese Company Fellowship is for research in bibliography and the history of printing.

• The Ruth and Lincoln Ekstrom Fellowship is for research on the history of women and the family in the Americas prior to 1825, including the question of cultural influences on gender formation.

• The Alexander O. Vietor Memorial Fellowship and the Marie L. and William R. Hartland Fellowship focus on research in early maritime history.

• Center for New World Comparative Studies Fellowships are available for scholars engaged in research in the comparative history of the colonial Americas.

• Maria Elena Cassiet Fellowships are restricted to scholars who are permanent residents of countries in Spanish America.

• The Maury A. Bromsens Fellowship is focused on colonial Spanish American history.

• The Touro National Heritage Trust Fellowship is for research on some aspect of the Jewish experience in the New World before 1825.

• The nine-month J. M. Stuart Fellowship is reserved for a graduate student at Brown University.

The foregoing list is intended to suggest areas of research on colonial America that may benefit from the use of JCB materials. Applicants should not, however, apply for a grant in a specific Fellowship category. All short-term applications are reviewed as a group without reference to these categories.

A few Fellowships-without-stipend will be offered every year to highly qualified applicants. Scholars interested in this option must go through the normal application procedure.

Long-Term Fellowships

The Library will also receive applications for Long-Term Fellowships, several of which are funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), an independent agency of the U.S. Federal government, by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and by the InterAmericas Fellowship which supports research on the history of the West Indies and the Caribbean basin. The R. David Parsons Fellowship supports the study of the history of exploration and discovery.

Long-Term Fellowships are for five to ten months (with a stipend of $4,000 per month). The term for these Fellowships will typically begin between June 1st and July 15th or between January 15th and March 15th. Applicants for NEH Long-Term Fellowships must be American citizens or have been resident in the United States for the three years immediately preceding the application deadline. Graduate students are not eligible for Long-Term Fellowships.

Recipients of all Fellowships are expected to relocate to Providence and to be in continuous residence at the John Carter Brown Library for the entire term of the award. Those living within commuting distance of the Library (approximately 45 miles distant) are ordinarily not eligible for JCB Fellowships.

Applications for all Fellowships will be evaluated by independent academic committees. Fellowships will be awarded on the basis of the applicant’s scholarly qualifications, the merits and significance of the project, and the particular need that the holdings of the John Carter Brown Library will fill in the development of the project. A good guide to the spectrum of research supported by the JCB is the list of “Publications by Fellows.”

Application forms can be downloaded from the Fellowship Applications page or they may be obtained by writing to the Director, John Carter Brown Library, Box 1894, Providence, RI 02912.

The deadline for submission of application materials is January 10, 2008; all materials must be postmarked no later than that date. Announcements of Fellowship awards will be made in mid-March, 2008.

The deadline for submissions to the next Newsletter is

October 3, 2007
In an era when “popular science” and “popular history” books regularly top the New York Times’ bestseller lists, it is no wonder that some enterprising soul (or souls) should publish a “popular book arts” book – and one on the rather curious phenomenon of miniature books seems perfectly fitting for such a venture. To that end, long-time antiquarian bookseller and ABAA member Anne C. Bromer, and Julian I. Edison, inveterate collector, current owner of the famed library of miniature books collected by Percy Edwin Spielmann, and for 40 years editor of Miniature Book News, have accepted that mission as their own, and have succeeded marvelously. The authors’ just reward for having undertaken the task will be the many pleasures that readers of this book will share. While perhaps not so scholarly or even as comprehensive as Louis W. Bondy’s groundbreaking study, Miniature Books: Their History from the Beginning to the Present Day (London, 1981), Bromer’s and Edison’s book is worthy companion, with much information and recent scholarship now made available that was not available to Bondy. Additionally, Bondy did not truck with manuscripts in miniature, limiting himself to printed texts only; Bromer and Edison fill that void by providing a rather detailed chapter on manuscripts. (They begin not even with manuscripts, in fact, but with cuneiform tablets!) And where Bondy’s text can be dry and technical, Bromer’s and Edison’s text is brimming with enthusiasm and excitement. Whatever the book lacks in historical perspective – it is arranged by subject rather than by a specific chronology – it makes up for in unwavering, even decorous connoisseurship. To the authors’ credit, the flow of the four thousand years they treat is scattershot, and the intent, I believe, is purposeful. All miniatures, joined at the hip by their diminutive nature, are, if not of one epoch, then certainly of one soul, and there seems to be no more – or no less – appreciation by the authors for the priceless illuminated manuscripts of the 15th century than there is for the most modern of artists’ miniature books. Nine chapters cover the spectrum of miniatures in a fluid and entertaining text, and combined with a series of a dozen or so shorter essays placed sporadically throughout in the form of sidebars, the book is filled with curious information that is sure to delight even the most casual reader. The opening chapter, illuminated manuscripts (no capitals here, please), contains detailed explanation of several important manuscripts, including the Trevison Book of Hours, and the John Croke Penetential [sic] and other Psalms (ca. 1509-46), which may have been owned by Anne Booley; the curious and endearing “Sophy’s Album,” created by Sophy Horsley and the composer Felix Mendelssohn between 1832 and 1862 to which Mendelssohn, Chopin, Brahms, Paganini, Liszt, Dickens, Jacob Grimm, Jenny Lind, among many others, contributed drawings, notes, and scraps of musical compositions; a discussion of Esther Inglis’ important texts; Sangorski and Sutcliffe’s handful of miniature manuscripts; and manuscript works by contemporary book artists. Other chapters include:

• the art of the book, which discusses the making of miniature books and their physical properties, including papermaking (with a nice tribute to Dard Hunter); marbling; printing (with a discussion of A Short Account of the First Rise and Progress of Printing, London: T. Parker, c. 1763, itself published, according to Bigmore and Wyman, only in miniature); and bindings old, new, ornate, jewel-encrusted, and plain, including William Pickering’s Horace (1820), the first of his Diamond Classics, with pages of just under four inches, and the first English book of any size published in cloth.

• drops of heavenly dew, focusing on religious works in miniature, including thumb Bibles, Psalters, books of verses, and the ubiquitous silver-clad Books of Common Prayer; Hebrew prayer books (including the smallest, one inch by seven-eighths inch, created by H. L. Meites in Chicago about 1924, which came enclosed in a brass locket complete with a magnifier); Arabic and Indian scriptures, including Korans, the Bhagavad-Gita, a Kordeh Avesta published in the Gujarati language; and Buddhist prayer scrolls.

• almanacs for daily living, starting with the first known complete specimen printed by Wynken de Worde in 1508; the Schloss Bijou Almanacs published between 1836 and 1843; French almanacs; lithographic almanacs, measuring three-quarters by one-half inch, first printed in the same year as Alois Senefelder’s treatise on the subject (1818, in case anyone’s wondering – or had forgotten); Viennese “sack” calendars, designed to fit into a lady’s handbag, or sack; and American advertising almanacs and calendars.

• the smallest books, micro- and ultraminatures, with a timeline of the world’s smallest books, from the relatively immense 1673–4 Bloem-Hofje Door (13 x 9 mm) – which remained the smallest printed book in the world up until the end of the 19th century – to the modern The Chameleon and The Twelve Horary Signs (1996 and 2000, respectively), which vie for the world’s smallest at .9 x .9 mm and .95 x .95 mm (a controversy which is apparently irresolvable, owing to difficulties in measuring the nearly-microscopic tomes (if tomes they be), and the variations in size of different copies); Japanese mamehons, or “bean-size” books; and dollhouse books.

• books for the young, from Thomas

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Book Review
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Boreman’s *The Gigantick Histories* (designed small, said the publisher, to allay fear in the child who owned it “growing lopsided, from the weight of such a gigantick work”), to alphabets, primers, and miniature boxed sets; Alfred Mill’s educational series (1807–1824); the Aunt Fanny/Aunt Laura books (1862–1866); fairy tale and fable collections; books written and produced by children; and books of optical illusions, including everyone’s favorite, the flip-book.

- presidents, politics, and propaganda, books of historical interest, with numerous pieces of campaign propaganda issued in miniature; speeches by any number of presidents, including Lincoln and the *Emancipation Proclamation*, first published in book form at just slightly over three inches, FDR (himself a fan of miniature books, with a collection numbered at 750), Kennedy, Ford, and others; Adlai Stevenson’s “Cat Act” veto; Fascist and Communist propaganda (the authors include here an interesting history of the printing of miniature books in Russia, from just after the Revolution to the collapse of Communism during which period miniature books were wildly popular, their production subsidized by the Soviet State); Mao Tse-Tung’s “Little Red Book”; and the book which accompanied Apollo 11 to the moon.

- *Life’s pleasures*, including eating, drinking, smoking, music, humor, travel and tourism, and every aspect of sex, from flirting to contraception, blushingly circumspect erotica to *A Treatise on the Use of Flogging in Venereal Affairs* (London, 1665), the first text in English on flagellation (the authors take the opportunity here to point out the convenience of such a volume’s diminutive – read “discrete” – size); as well as an homage to Ruth Adomeit (1910–1996) “the mother of miniature book collection and scholarship,” one-time editor of *The Miniature Book Collector*, and the author of *Three Centuries of Thumb Bibles*, the standard reference book on the subject.

- *oddeities and objets d’art*, including oddities such as *Quads Within Quads* (London, 1884), a book of jokes about printing within a book of jokes about printing; fore-edge paintings; books printed on odd materials; dos-a-dos bindings; fishing books incorporating fishing flies; and artist’s books – every last one of them a miniature jewel.

Pictured throughout, and alongside the miniature books are the various tiny pieces of furniture which often were part and parcel of their publication. There are a number of fine examples shown here, including the revolving bookcase built to hold the complete works of Shakespeare published by David Bryce & Son in Glasgow in 1904, a damask bookcase (Paris, ca. 1895), an 18th century Japanese lacquered box with a sliding lid housing the 28-volume set of *The Tale of Genji*, and a five and one-half inch lectern to which has been chained “the smallest Bible in the world,” at one and three-quarters by one and one-half inches. Although bibliographical details are scant, there are enough in depth studies of particular miniatures so that any student of the little books would want to have Bromer and Edison at hand. The index is extensive, and the sections at the end of the text (“where miniature books can be found,” “miniature books in selected libraries,” and a rather extensive “selected bibliography” on seven pages and in quadruple column), make the book a useful one for any student of the genre, whether they be a collector, librarian, or bookseller. If there are omissions they are not readily apparent to a reviewer who favors quartos and folios, although I did notice that there was no mention of the two miniatures that were created by Harry and Caress Crosby at the Black Sun Press, nor any mention of Wilbur Macy Stone who put together an outstanding collection of miniature books, nor William Loring Andrews’s *Sextodecimos et infra* (New York, 1899) which inexplicably didn’t even make it into the “selected bibliography” – Andrews, one of the founders of the Grolier Club, ironically one of the co-publishers of this book.

But there can be no really serious complaints about this wonderful enterprise. The design of this (almost) square quarto is pleasing, the layout exacting and purposeful. The use of lower case letters where upper case would traditionally be used (title-page, chapter headings, sectional titles, etc.) makes a poignant, if subliminal statement; the dozen or so side-bars are contained in colored frames printed to the margin and coded to the color chapter numbers; and the 2-inch square boxes surrounding the chapter headings echo the miniature book itself. All edges gilt and a ribbon bookmark are the icing on the cake. As a tribute to their mentor, the authors have dedicated the book to the late Stanley Marcus (of Neiman-Marcus fame, and himself a well-known collector, publisher, and popularizer of miniature books), who presciently contributed a written foreword to the work seven years ago (two years before his death), when plans for the book were still brewing.

At least seven years in the making, then, the book is a visual delight, illustrated with almost three-hundred color photographs, most shown at actual size. One cannot say enough for the dazzling photography by Steve Adams whose name well should have been put on the title-page, as too the creative image stylist, Rindy FitzGibbon. In the end, their collaboration, together with that of Bromer and Edison, have made this book a winner on all accounts. Don’t be surprised to see second and third printings, and when the book starts winning awards, you can say you heard it here first. *Miniature Books 4,000 Years of Tiny Treasures* accompanies an exhibition held at the Grolier Club from May 15 through July 28, 2007; additional events and exhibitions are scheduled at the Boston Public Library, through September 2; the Salem Athenaeum in Salem, Mass., where Ms. Bromer spoke about the book on July 20; and finally, the Olin Library at Washington University in St. Louis: no dates yet available, but one assumes either a lecture by Mr. Edison, a St. Louis resident, or a display of some portion of his personal collection – which numbers in the thousands.

Rob Rulon-Miller
Jeffrey Thomas
San Francisco, CA

Jeffrey Thomas, 68, died June 2 after an almost year-long battle with cancer. Jeffrey was born in New York City in 1938, the son of then-famous Wall Street broker, Joe Thomas. Jeffrey graduated from Yale University in 1960, after which he served two years in the U.S. Army as an intelligence officer in Italy. In 1964 he moved to San Francisco and earned his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley, where he wrote - in his own words - “a shockingly long dissertation on the California writer Bret Harte.” It was Jeffrey’s interest in California literature that brought him to the attention of San Francisco bookseller Warren Howell, of John Howell-Books, who needed a cataloguer for a recently acquired collection of Bret Harte manuscripts. Jeffrey proved himself to be an able cataloguer and bookman, and Warren Howell offered him a full time position. Jeffrey worked as Warren’s assistant for over six years, and like many before him at John Howell-Books, he learned the ins and outs of the rare book world from one of its most prominent mentors.

In October 1980 Jeffrey left John Howell-Books to go into business for himself. He first worked from his home while he built an inventory and reference collection, and in June 1982 he officially opened his shop, Jeffrey Thomas Fine & Rare Books, at 49 Geary Street in downtown San Francisco. As evidence of the respect others had for Jeffrey at even such an early stage in his career, his opening reception was attended by almost all the Northern California trade, including none other than Warren Howell, who was not known to look favorably on former employees who set up competing businesses down the street. Jeffrey joined the ABAA as a full member in 1983, and in the letter accompanying his application he wrote that “our stock consists of some 4000 volumes of what we regard as worthwhile, rare and interesting and valuable material from many fields . . . ” That was a classic example of a Jeffrey Thomas understatement. In an age of the specialist, Jeffrey was a throwback to the world of the general antiquarian bookseller. In his stock could be found an amazing array of first editions of English and American literature, color plate books, Americana (north, south, east and west), travels and voyages to and from all parts of the world (real and imaginary), science and medicine, fine press books, architecture, aeronautics, children’s literature, art, photography, beat literature, bibliography, dance, music, hunting, golf, cooking, law, humor, autographs and manuscripts, continental books, maps, prints and ephemera – and that is only a partial list. At book fairs his booths were always attractively, even tantalizingly, arranged, as was his first catalogue, issued to coincide with the opening of his shop. Its foreword modestly described it as a “list of 49 items, that number being chosen to celebrate our new address (49 Geary Street), the California Gold Rush, the square of 7 and the achievements of the San Francisco 49ers (a football team).”

The active San Francisco book world, with its many local bibliophilic institutions, was well served by Jeffrey. He was, among other things, President of the Northern California Chapter of the ABAA, a member of the local ABAA book fair committee for at least two decades, a member of the Book Club of California, where he served on the board of directors (and was a regular at the Book Club Monday night open houses), and a member of the Roxburghe Club of San Francisco. More recently Jeffrey also served on the Council of the Bancroft Library.

Local book fairs and used and antiquarian book shops were regular hunting grounds for Jeffrey, which he often traveled to, dressed in a blue blazer and tie, on his Honda scooter. And it was rare that Jeffrey ever left a book shop or a book fair empty handed. Amongst his varied interests and numerous subjects covered in his inventory, Jeffrey always found worthwhile books to add to his stock. As well, Jeffrey generously supported numerous local fine press printers, bookbinders and book artists, and examples of their recent works could be seen displayed in his shop.

Like many of his colleagues, Jeffrey found in antiquarian bookselling a profession that lent itself to his scholarly inclinations and enthusiasms. The restless ambitions and the hustle-bustle of the world his father had come from did not interest him. He once even remarked “in my family, ambition tends to skip a generation.” Bookselling provided an agreeable alternative that suited his seemingly unflappable reserve and intellectual demeanor. Jeffrey was an avid reader of books, and his learning was obvious from his fine (and sometimes, like his dissertation on Bret Harte, a little long) catalogue descriptions. Nearly every book he pur-

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In Memoriam

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chased for inventory, regardless of how obscure it might be, he took seriously, and under no circumstances would he be rushed to price a book before he had carefully considered, researched, and catalogued it—often to the consternation and annoyance of his more eager and aggressive colleagues, who learned over time that Jeffrey was not, in the parlance of the trade, a “dealer’s dealer.” In fact, Jeffrey always put collegiality, thoughtfulness and kindness above competitiveness and commerce, which I learned firsthand on my very first day in 1983 as the owner of The Brick Row Book Shop, when Jeffrey walked in the door and handed me a box of chocolate truffles with a card attached, welcoming me to the San Francisco book trade.

Jeffrey’s career as an antiquarian bookseller was distinguished by the dignity he brought to his profession, a profession he treated with respect, as he did equally all his colleagues in it, from the grandest of rare book dealers to the smallest of used booksellers and struggling book scouts. His wit was erudite and quick, always dry, often delivered with a wonderful dose of self-deprecation, and never mean spirited towards others. He did not seek attention for himself, or a platform for his ego; no one ever heard Jeffrey brag about important sales he had made or bargains he had found. Leaving an impression about his accomplishments was not his goal, but through his quiet, steady and big-hearted manner Jeffrey left a lasting impression with all those who knew him well.

John Crichton

Members in the News

Vic Zoschak of Tavistock Books in Alameda, California recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of his shop with a reception. Below are a few photos taken by Alan Bamberger from the event.


photo credit: Alan Bamberger

Membership Updates

Harold M. Burstein and Company has a new address, phone, and email:
35 Cross St., Bernardston, MA 01337-9566. Phone: (413) 648-0213. Email: burstein.bks@comcast.net

James Dourgarian has a new address:
1595-B Third Ave., Walnut Creek, CA 94597.

The Fine Books Company has a new email address: finebooks@mich.com

Leonard Fox Ltd. has a new postal code: 10065.

John Hendsey-Bookseller has a new email address:
hendseybooks@roadrunner.com

Heritage Book Shop has a new address:
P.O. Box 691670, West Hollywood, CA 90069.

Locus Solus Rare Books, Ltd has a new postal code: 10065.

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Membership Updates, continued

The Observatory has a new address:
299 N. Franklin St., Juneau, AK 99801.

Edward T. Pollack has a new address, phone and email: Edward T. Pollack
Fine Arts Rare Books & Fine Prints,
25 Forest Avenue, Portland, ME 04101. Phone: (207) 699-2919. Email: pollackbks@maine.rr.com.

New Members

We welcome the following new members who were accepted at the Board of Governors Meeting in August:

Michael Buehler, Boston Rare Maps
Incorporated, 88 High Street, Southampton, MA 01073. Phone: (413) 527-4020. Email: mlb@bostonraremaps.com.

Priscilla Lowry-Gregor, Lowry-James Rare Prints & Books
P.O. Box 376, Clinton, WA 98236. Phone: (360) 221-0477. Fax: (360) 221-0477. Email: priscilla@lowryjames.com.

Jack H. Nessel, G. Curwen Books
1 W. 67th Street, New York, NY 10023. (212) 595-5904. Email: gcbs@earthlink.net.

For Associate Membership:
Cassandra Joffre, B&L Rootenberg
Rare Books, Sherman Oaks, CA.

New Entity: John Windle, Children’s Book Gallery
San Francisco, CA.

Sue Allen
Susan M. Allen
Martin Antonetti
Nicolas Barker
Wm P. Barlow, Jr
Timothy Barrett
Terry Belanger
John Bidwell
Erin C. Blake
John Buchtel
Morris Cohen
Albert Derolez
Mark Dimunation
Johanna Drucker
Consuelo Dutschke
David Gants
Eric Holzenberg
James Mosley
Paul Needham
Richard Noble
William Noel
Barbara
Shailor
Jan Storm
van Leeuwen
Ellia Tinios
David
Warrington
Roger
Wieck
Michael
Winship

Based at the University of Virginia, Rare Book School (RBS) offers five-day non-credit courses in January and June - September in Charlottesville, New York, Baltimore, and Washington on bookish subjects ranging from medieval bookbinding structures to modern artists’ books. RBS students (their average age is about forty) include academics, antiquarian booksellers, book collectors, conservators and binders, and rare book librarians. Some current RBS faculty members’ names are listed in the long tail to the left. Visit the RBS website at rarebookschool.org