

# BookFare

The Newsletter of the

Australian & New Zealand Association of Antiquarian Booksellers

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Editor: Jörn Harbeck

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## Barry Humphries appointed Patron of Honour by the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers



**Barry Humphries**, AO, CBE, the Australian comedian, satirist, artist, and author has been appointed a Patron of Honour by the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers (ILAB). The appointment recognises his major contribution to the antiquarian book trade.

Mr Humphries graciously accepted the honorary position following a joint invitation from the Presidents of the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association (ABA) in the United Kingdom and the Australian and New Zealand Association of Antiquarian Booksellers (ANZAAB): Laurence Worms and Sally Burdon.

He joins a select body which includes Sir David Attenborough and Umberto Eco.

Mr Humphries is perhaps best known for his stage and television alter ego Dame Edna Everage. He is also a film producer and scriptwriter, a star of London's West End musical theatre, an award-winning writer, an accomplished landscape painter and a prominent book collector. Mr Humphries has spent much of his life immersed in music, literature and the arts. A self-proclaimed 'bibliomaniac', his house in London supposedly contains some 25,000 books, many of them first editions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The ILAB is a global network for the rare book trade and represents 1860 of the world's finest antiquarian booksellers in 32 countries.

## ANZAAB awards Paul Brunton OAM Honorary Membership

**ANZAAB members** gathered in December last year to celebrate the award of Honorary Membership of ANZAAB to Emeritus Curator of the State Library of NSW Paul Brunton. Honorary Membership of ANZAAB is given to an individual who has rendered notable service to antiquarian bookselling. It is a very special honour which in ANZAAB's thirty six years we have only awarded once before, to Melbourne scholar of the book, Professor Wallace Kirsop.



Paul Brunton has been a great friend of all Australians who value our culture. Throughout his career he has secured for our nation many incredibly significant items such as the letters of Second Lieutenant RN Newton Fowell (1768 – 1790), and those of George Bass, that are now forever in our nation's hands.

I invite you to follow this link <http://media.smh.com.au/system/ipad/paul-brunton-and-some-of-his-acquisitions-3943149.html> for a short video during which Paul describes the significance and acquisition of both the Newton Fowell letters and what is believed to be the earliest jigsaw puzzle showing Cook's Endeavour voyage. The Newton Fowell letters, now held in the collection of the Mitchell Library, Sydney, make for fascinating reading.

These important letters and their transcripts are available to read at [http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover\\_collections/history\\_nation/terra\\_australis/letters/fowell/index.html](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections/history_nation/terra_australis/letters/fowell/index.html)

Paul's passion for manuscripts, books and other related materials is not limited to early European Australia and runs through to modern times. His acquisition of artist Brett Whiteley's letters to his mother is a perfect example of this. Over the many years he worked at the Mitchell Library Paul added hundreds of collections and tens of thousands of items to their holdings. As well as his constant and persistent search for material of historical importance, Paul has given generously of his time and regularly speaks at local libraries and other venues. He speaks so well and with such enthusiasm that it would be impossible to come away without having been entertained and educated. A true ambassador of antiquarian books!

Paul Brunton's contribution to Australian cultural life was recognised in the Australia Day Honours in January 2012 when he was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for service to Australian history through curatorial roles with the Mitchell Library.

ANZAAB is very proud to have Paul Brunton, OAM, as an Honorary Member.

Sally Burdon, ANZAAB President

## New ANZAAB member: Littera Scripta

**Having recently sold** the specialist antique print & map gallery I ran for over 30 years, I am now free to pursue my passion for medieval and renaissance history, as manifested in the books and hence the individual leaves of the time.

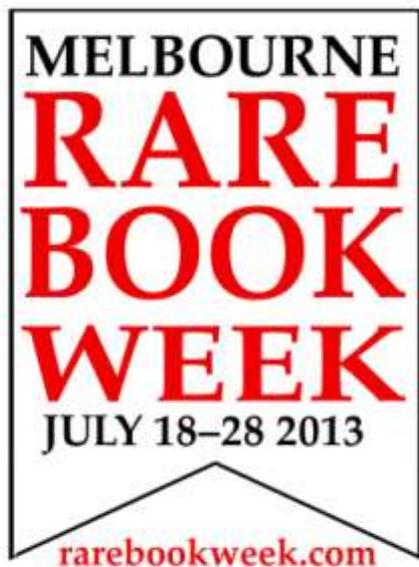
Sacred to secular, theism to humanism, manuscript to mechanical printing; I find the evolution of medieval society to the flowering of the Renaissance one of the most fascinating periods in history. The revolutionary changes wrought to European philosophy, society and technology were profound and reverberate to this day.

The leaves to me are utterly involving, each with its layers of meaning and beauty. The language, the content, the script or type, the illuminations, the feel of the vellum or paper, the artistry and scholarship - all these and other factors are evident in these fragile leaves that have survived many centuries.

As a Guest Exhibitor at last year's Rare Book Fair I was given a wonderful welcome by ANZAAB. Everyone went to great lengths to make me feel at home. So I feel proud and privileged to now be one of what Kay Craddock calls "our mob".

Andrew Leckie





## Book Fairs

### Melbourne in July

#### Melbourne Rare Book Week

July 18 to 28

incorporating ANZAAB's

40<sup>th</sup> Australian Antiquarian Book Fair

The Australian and New Zealand Association of Antiquarian Booksellers is proud to present its 40th Australian Antiquarian Book Fair, to be held from Friday July 26 to Sunday July 28 in the University of Melbourne's historic Wilson Hall. Fine, rare and collectable books, prints, maps and ephemera will be offered for sale by leading Australian and international booksellers. Explore the world of books with knowledgeable booksellers specialising in subjects as diverse as art, literature, travel,

Australiana, fine bindings, militaria, sport, natural history, children's books, maps and prints. Entry to the Book Fair is free.

The ANZAAB Melbourne Rare Book Fair is part of Melbourne Rare Book Week, July 18–28. This year even more libraries and museums will join with booksellers to showcase Melbourne as a UNESCO City of Literature. The theme is “a passion for books” — and passionate bibliophiles will find much to interest and entertain them during this extended week of free lectures, exhibitions and entertainment.

The Melbourne Rare Book Week program is still evolving, but it already includes some marvellous events —for example, treasures from the rich tapestry of Italian culture displayed in an exhibition of *Italian Books Through the Ages* at the University of Melbourne's Baillieu Library, highlighting its exciting new purchase of Aldus Manutius's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, printed in Venice in 1499; *The Art of Praise: the Italian Medieval Choir Book 1250-1550* featured in an exhibition and lecture by Professor Margaret Manion at St Mary's Newman Academic Centre; the romance of poetry showcased by the Matheson Library, Monash University; lectures on the physical nature of rare books at the State Library of Victoria; a lecture on the fascinating language of books by Professor Kate Burridge at the Old Treasury Building; and *They are still strange people, these book collectors*: another look at rare books, crime and murder by Graham Dudley, presented by the Friends of the Baillieu Library. And for the curious bibliosoph, bibliotaph, bibliolater, bibliognost or bibliomaniac, an opportunity to find out whether their collecting tastes and techniques are based in romance or reality when they consult a bibliopole at the Rare Books Assessment Day presented by the Melbourne Museum.

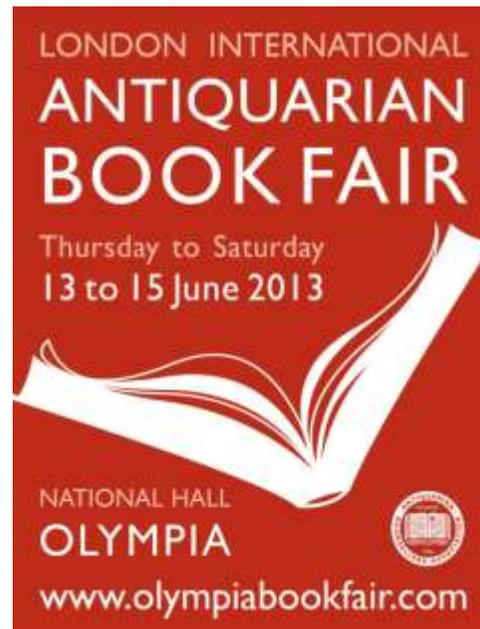
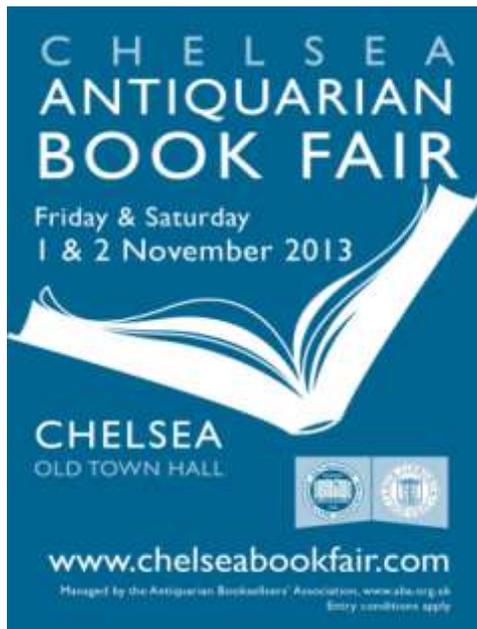
### Sydney in November

ANZAAB's 41<sup>st</sup> Australian Antiquarian Book Fair

November 8 – 10 · Roundhouse, University of NSW

More details will be announced on the ANZAAB website

[www.anzaab.com.au](http://www.anzaab.com.au)



## ILAB Book Fairs in London

**ANZAAB is pleased to support this year's London Book Fairs, presented by the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association.**

The first of these is the London International Antiquarian Book Fair which will take place at Olympia between Thursday, June 13 and Saturday, June 15, 2013. The fair is in its 56<sup>th</sup> year – making it the oldest Book Fair in the UK – and it attracts nearly 200 of the world's best dealers offering a range of fascinating books, maps and ephemera including historical items from the early days of printing to modern first editions. For further details on the fair, please visit

<http://www.olympiabookfair.com/>. Register for complimentary tickets at <http://www.olympiabookfair.com/register-for-tickets/anzaab>.

The hugely popular 23rd Chelsea Antiquarian Book Fair, takes place on Friday, November 1 and Saturday, November 2, 2013 in the stunning surroundings of The Chelsea Old Town Hall, King's Road, London. 80 exhibitors, who specialise in all types of books, manuscripts and ephemera, will be taking part. For more details on the fair, please visit [www.chelseabookfair.com](http://www.chelseabookfair.com)

## Book Review

### **OBSESSIONS and CONFESSIONS of a BOOK LIFE**

by Colin Franklin, Oak Knoll Press, Book of Kells, Bernard Quaritch Ltd. 2012

**In my bookshop my favourite section is 'Books About Books and Book Collecting'**, despite the fact that I seldom sell any of them. It must be the comfort of seeing them in the bookcase, picking one up every now and again, and both adding to my bookselling knowledge and being entertained at the same time that keeps them in their place of honour. So when news of Colin Franklin's book of essays 'Obsessions and Confessions of a Book Life' was circulated by Fiona Kells, I was keen to get some copies, and I certainly have not been sorry. Rather, the book's entertaining, well-written, and instructive contents have been a revelation, and I have not been able to resist reading sections aloud to friends and book club members alike, and of course promoting the book to customers. I particularly like the overall view of bookseller Franklin of the importance of taste over mere calculation, when judging the worth of a book by collectors, librarians and booksellers, especially when dealing with private presses, early editions of Shakespeare, Japanese scrolls or works from Morris's Kelmscott Press.

The chapter on William Morris is a deeply affectionate account of one of Franklin's heroes, from an endearingly personal point of view. As a young man he was rowing a boat on the Thames, and as he negotiated its meanderings near Lechdale he sighted across the fields an old gabled house

'...and with some instinct which came from nowhere I said 'that must be Kelmscott'. We moored the boat, walked across and indeed it was - much as Morris and his friends must have viewed it, arriving up-river in the chapter familiar to readers of *'News from Nowhere'*.

There is much on 'The Firm' and the very many aspects of their commercial success, but what is most engaging about this particular essay is that by the end of it, apart from its value in describing his crowning achievement, The Kelmscott Press,

the reader gets a clear view of what it may have been like to meet the ‘extraordinary’ William Morris.

I’m sure most dealers in old books and manuscript material like to read about the cut and thrust of the saleroom, so the essay entitled ‘The Nijinsky Peccadillo’ is certainly a classic tale and probably a highlight of this diverse book. It is the inside story of his purchase, on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 1975 at an end-of-season Sotheby’s sale, of the diary of Vaslav Nijinsky, tucked away amongst a swag of unremarkable lots. Described as *the* central document in the whole history of ballet by a trustee of the Nijinsky estate, it captured Franklin’s imagination, and, egged on by his Russian scholar son, he purchased it for forty-two thousand pounds. The immediate result was instant celebrity and much media focus, especially with regard to the formerly suppressed explicit sexual passages. The prospect of these mesmerized the press of course, one headline reading ‘COLIN’S 50,000 pounds SEXY DIARY’. Franklin’s description of his experiences following this amazing purchase are funny and revealing.

I doubt if many of us will have such a vivid booklife to look back on.

Roz Greenwood

## News from Adelaide

### Swimming against the Tide in a Small Sea, or, Events at Treloars in Adelaide

#### Choice antiquarian books and desirable rare printed ephemera are one thing.

The mass of material they frequently lurk in is quite another. What keeps me enthusiastic after more than 37 years in the trade is the simple fact that scarcely a week goes by when there isn't something genuinely exciting turning up. And take my word for it, Adelaide, population one million, is not the centre of the bookselling universe ...

However, in recent months I have unearthed some extraordinary items. I have discovered what is shaping up to be an unrecorded contemporary portrait photograph of John McDouall Stuart (that takes some doing!). I found amongst many hundreds of totally unsaleable books in divers languages other than English a lengthy unpublished manuscript based on the diary of a Danish immigrant to the

Victorian goldfields (1853-1872) – and yes, my Danish has improved, mange tak. In a copy of Donald Friend's magnum opus, Bumbooziana (not a bad book if you like a bad book), I came across four pages of original manuscript and artwork relating to it. This bifolium presumably went missing prior to publication, because the published work has completely different text and illustrations for these two leaves. These items were not presented to me as signed, sealed and delivered treasures; I made the running. I can scarcely imagine what appears (or, just as likely, is not recognised) on the bigger stage.

It is tempting to think 'why bother with the rest of the material in these collections, just leave the owners and their other books to fend for themselves; sack the staff, close down the shops, become a private dealer in the very few items for the very few buyers' – and a position between the current reality and the daydream is probably on the cards. Objectively, it makes sense – but how many objective rare book dealers do you know?! Most of us love books and dealing too much for our own good.

After nearly 40 years of concentrated effort, I have accumulated a wealth of knowledge and considerable skill, and two of my main passions are for manuscripts and early photography, areas not many dealers tackle. I have also accumulated a frightening amount of stock, and if I don't lose my nerve (or my health), that mountain has to be levelled before anything else can take its place. I suspect that the real test of a bookdealer's skill these days comes from the ability to make money from the ever-increasing percentage of decent stock that is being reduced to commercially unviable prices. In other words, it now costs more to handle many worthy books than the price one can get for them. Compounding this dilemma are several inescapable truths: fewer people want these books, although they have never been cheaper; untold quantities of similar sorts of things are destined to hit the decimated ranks of dealers over the coming years, as the aging population of traditional bookbuyers quits the market; and the costs of doing business rise, as ever.

What am I doing about it? The method I developed early in my career to handle the bottom end of collections, after items fit only to be pulped have been removed, still works today (although the tide has clearly turned). Twice a year on average,

over the past 25 years or more, I have hired a local town hall and filled it each time with 8000-10,000 books at sale prices. Traditionally these sales take place over three days – Saturday, Sunday and Monday – and on the final day, everything is half the sale price. Needless to say, this helps the clearance rate! Between mid-March and early June this year, I have four town hall sales scheduled, all with completely different stock, and with some novel approaches being tried. I told you I was serious!

The stock comprises everything from 'the wrong copy of the right title' on the specials tables, innumerable classics and standard works, to last year's (and previous generations') bestsellers, and currently uncommercial but definitely not unsaleable categories (I am not a miracle worker!). Examples from the current crop of sales include a copy of Oxley's *Journals of Two Expeditions* (1820); yes, the first edition, but waterstained, in a pedestrian binding and lacking all but a few plates; the facsimile edition of Flinders' *Voyage to Terra Australis* (1966) – our fourth-best set, with the light brown cloth a little grubby; numerous antiquarian books (including travel) from the original Port Adelaide Institute Library ... Other large collections being mined to supply these sales include a cricket horde (it exceeded 7000 items!); a retired Asian Studies academic's extensive working library; a fellow academic's personal collection rich in philosophy, Greek and Latin texts, and linguistics; and at the other end of the scale, hundreds of British and Japanese car and spare parts manuals from the 1950s-80s. These items are definitely not for the cabinet collector, but they come together to form an extraordinary and strangely appealing – no, compelling – presence that booklovers hopefully will never choose to resist. Virtually all subjects are represented, and there is often no rhyme or reason to the mixture of collections being tapped each time, so you can understand why these sales are for personal shoppers only, but a browser's paradise!

Our sale on the Anzac Day weekend (Saturday 27 to Monday 29 April) is an experiment. It features single-owner collections of Second World War military and aviation history (upwards of 3500 books), plus gardening and cookery (well over 1200 books). Make a holiday weekend of it – fly over to Adelaide and take in the Turner exhibition as well, before it ends!

Our Queen's Birthday long weekend sale (Saturday 8 to Monday 10 June) contains over 8000 books from collections probably yet to be acquired, at the rate we buy

books! Early days yet, but pencil it in ... Full details of these and other events may be found on our website at [www.treloars.com](http://www.treloars.com)

## The High Cost and Low Return on Some Services

In an infrequent review of my business practices, such as they are, it finally dawned on me that printed mail-order catalogues might almost be last century. Certainly, most of my colleagues no longer publish them – this is in part why I have persisted. But I am beginning to count the costs of providing this service (which I firmly believe it is, and one for which I have never charged), particularly when there is a much cheaper and more profitable model now available. I have recently embarked on a series of fully illustrated website catalogues. I emailed the latest one to about 2800 people on my customer database for about \$45 all up. The response was excellent, and it was almost by return email. How good is that for cash-flow?! This rapid reaction may also be a fly in the ointment – the party's over almost before it begins – but that's an issue for another day.

Not wishing to disenfranchise those without email addresses, and to satisfy those customers who prefer to receive printed catalogues, I issued an unillustrated version of the first two catalogues in this website series. I explained at length, and prominently at the head of the catalogue, the new and improved direction in which I was heading. To make doubly sure the message was received, I included a separate form repeating this information, asking the recipients to tick one of two boxes – here's an email address, or, please continue to send printed lists. (I could have included a third box – 'please take my name off your mailing list' – but I've never found people backward in coming forward on that point.)

Approximately six weeks ago, I posted this material to 1030 people. Printing, envelopes, labels and postage cost about \$1200 (and this was cheap), and we spent a day folding and stuffing. To date, I have received 82 responses to my request – 44 new email addresses, 22 requests for printed catalogues, 11 'return to sender', 4 'please remove my name' and one recently deceased notification. There are still 948 people who have not replied; they account for 92% of the \$1200 (\$1104). What do I do next time? Print and send just 22 catalogues? Tempting!

Michael Treloar

## Vale Barbara Burdon



Barbara was born in Sussex UK on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1924 where she lived her first five years. Her family then migrated to Switzerland because her father had been gassed during WWI and his medical advice suggested that the Swiss climate would suit him better. After five years there Barbara's father died and the family moved back to the UK. In Switzerland Barbara began her love affair with the French language.

After finishing school she went to study medicine, but these studies were interrupted when she met a handsome young superintendent of the Indian Police, and within 3 weeks Barbara married this man, Tom Burdon, and went off to India where Tom was a 21 year old Superintendent of Police. It was in India, in what is now Pakistan, that the first of her five children were born. India was a great adventure for the young Barbara. It was the last days of the Raj, and times were often dangerous for young English colonials, and Barbara is said to have slept with a gun under her pillow.

Jonathan, her eldest child, and now an ANZAAB member, was born in 1946 in India and then followed four other children who were born in Singapore and the UK.

Over the next 13 years the family lived in Penang, Singapore and Jamaica and other West Indian Islands. Tom was working as a marine zoologist for the UN or local Governments. Barbara reared the children and maintained her interest in books

and literature. The Burdons moved to Australia in 1964 settling in Canberra in 1967. Here they commenced a business called *Weekend Gallery* in Hughes in 1969. The business was run from a converted flat under the house and was renamed *Weekend Gallery Books* in the early 1970s, and sold books, prints and maps. Tom sadly suffered from Alzheimer's Disease and could take no part in the business of antiquarian bookselling from the early 1970s.

In 1982 Barbara's daughter Sally returned from her youthful travels around the world with partner Martin and soon after Barbara and Sally commenced a business called *The Old Bookroom*. Barbara, although not a foundation member, joined ANZAAB in its early years. She was the first antiquarian bookseller in Canberra, and worked as such until she retired just a couple of years ago due to ill health.

Barbara attended all of the ANZAAB Bookfairs and always had a positive attitude about the fair. When sales were slow, Barbara always believed that the rainbow with the pot of gold at the end was just around the corner and all she had to do was keep working.

Barbara had a very big influence on Antiquarian bookselling in Australia. Two of her five children, Sally and Jonathan, are members ANZAAB and a third, Elizabeth, is a member of ABAA, whilst one daughter in law, Kay Craddock, and one son in law, Martin Nagle, are members of ANZAAB. Another daughter in law, Jill, for a number of years compiled Australian Book Auction Records.

Barbara encouraged others in bookselling. She always gave me great encouragement in my early days of bookselling, and convinced me that I should apply for membership of ANZAAB. She always encouraged all my mad ventures. Whenever in Canberra I would stop by for a meal, and in fact this was often the main attraction in going to Canberra.

Barbara, despite having to cope with family illness, ran the business with optimism, enthusiasm and scholarship, and the fact that she has left behind a business, run now for some years by her daughter Sally, and offspring who are prominent booksellers, is a testament to Barbara.

Barbara Burdon died on 20th March 2013 in Canberra.

Paul J Feain