

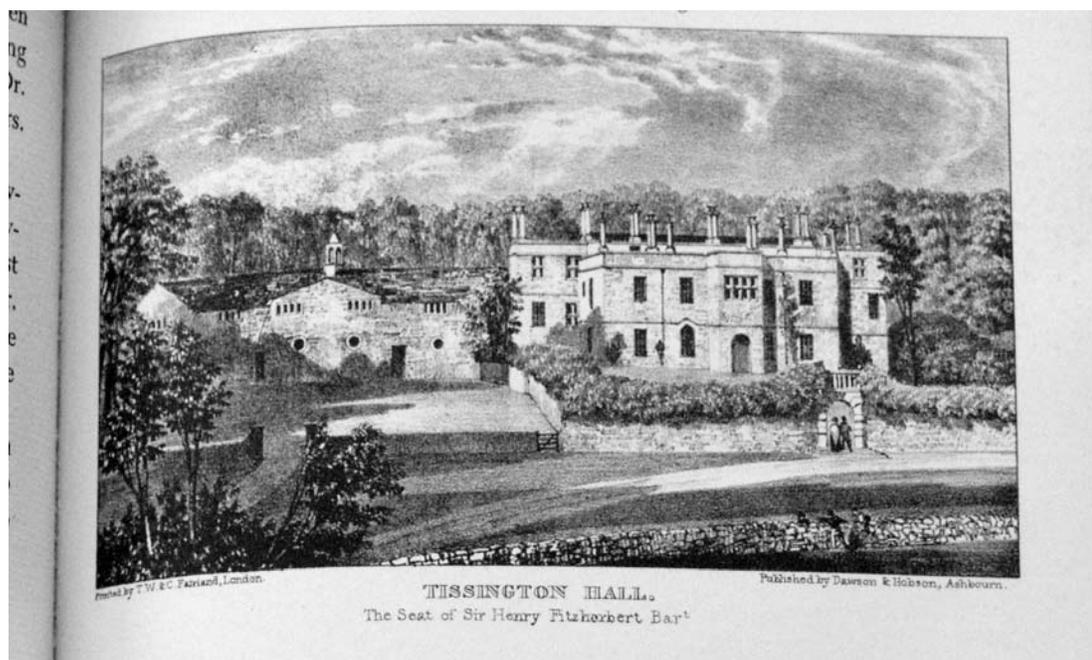
CAXTONIAN

JOURNAL OF THE CAXTON CLUB

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JULY 2007

A Serendipitous Acquisition



Tissington Hall, home of Hill Boothby

Paul T. Ruxin

The phone rang. It was April, or perhaps May, 2006. A voice, obviously elderly, said that he has some books and someone told him I might want to buy them. Not sure who told him. The voice belongs to Dr. Curwen. He is eighty-six (I think). Lives outside Boston. His health is poor. His children don't want the books. They were his father's. What are they, I asked. He didn't know much—lots of them have to do with Samuel Johnson. There is an old dictionary. He believes it is a copy Johnson gave someone. Such moments happen for collectors, but usually while they are asleep. I was certainly wide awake. Well, Dr. Curwen pursued, are you interested?

Fairness required me to say yes, of course, but that I recommend you consult with an expert, an independent appraiser. The best, of course, is Bob Barry of Stonehill, Inc., in

New Haven, who has helped build many great Johnson/Boswell collections, and disbursed others, including that of Herman "Fritz" Liebert of Yale. Thus Bob Barry came to Dr. Curwen, and saw the books. Bob knows me and my collection (no minor part of which he sent my way), and he knew that I would want that "old dictionary." It is a 1755 first edition of Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*, bound in two volumes, contemporary boards skillfully rebacked, perhaps by the master New England binder Arno Werner (1899-1995). The first volume is inscribed on the free front end paper, "Hill Boothby The Gift of the author." The second volume is inscribed "H. Boothby The Gift of the Author." The inscriptions are writ large, in a very lovely hand.

Johnson famously wrote that second marriages represent "the triumph of hope over experience." He was widowed in 1752 at the age of 42, although his wife was then

63, after nearly 17 years of marriage. He did not marry again, perhaps taking his own advice. His marriage was largely happy, but less than ideal; odd not only because his wife was 20 years his elder, but also because his dedication to her throughout the marriage was challenged by their poverty, the extensive time they spent apart, by her addiction to alcohol, opium, and romance novels, and by periods of involuntary celibacy enforced by Tetty's unavailability or unwillingness. Yet we know that Johnson did at least consider remarriage. His journal for Easter Sunday, April 22, 1753, as surreptitiously copied by

Boswell, records the following, about a year after Tetty's death:

As I purpose to try on Monday to seek a new wife without any derogation from dear Tetty's memory I purpose at Sacrament in the morning to take my leave of Tetty in a solemn commendation of her soul to God.

Did he have someone in particular in mind? If so, whom?

His language does not suggest that this was a search with a focus. "Seek a new wife..." he wrote, rather than "pursue Miss _____," or "propose marriage to _____" or "court Miss _____." This suggests only that Johnson was lonely, and wanted intimacy of a sort different than what he found within his own odd household, or wide circle of acquaintances. There were several possibilities in 1753, but learned scholars have come to the view that the most likely candidate for Samuel

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CAXTONIAN

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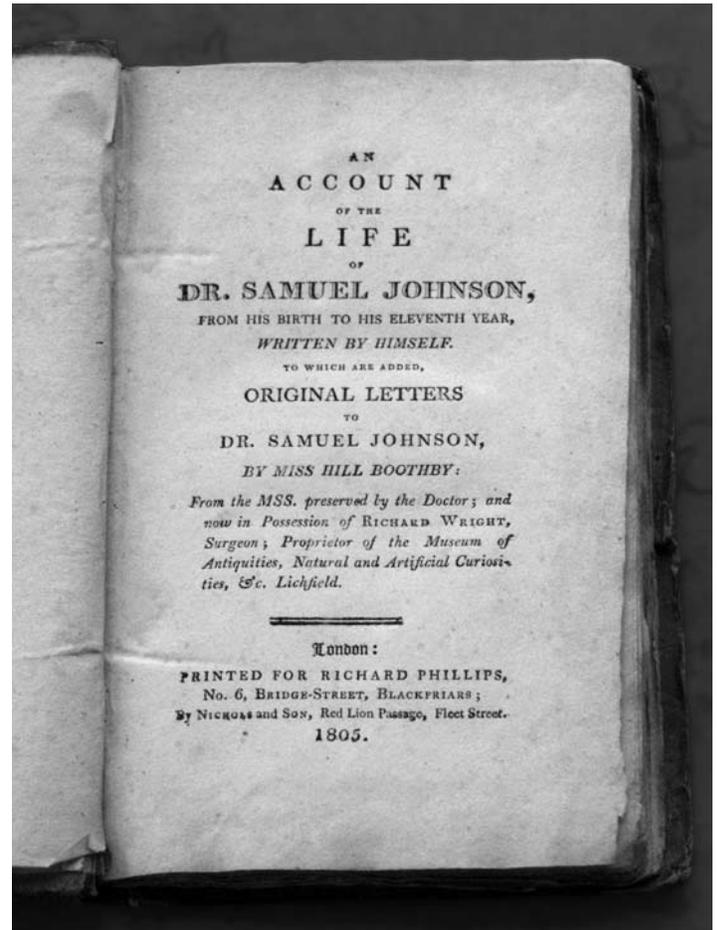
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BOOTHBY GIFT, from page 1

Johnson's second wife would have been Miss Hill Boothby. A year older than Johnson, she was a "pious and learned lady, unmarried," according to one report. Johnson had probably met her in 1739, on a visit to his friend Dr. Taylor. They corresponded over the years. According to two distinguished Johnsonians, Donald and Mary Hyde (later Vicountess Eccles), "As his acquaintance with Hill Boothby grew, he formed the highest opinion of her attractions, purity of mind, her intellect, wit and grace of manners." Nearly a quarter of a century after her passing, according to one close friend, which left him "almost distracted with his grief; and... the friends about him had much ado to calm the violence of his emotion," Johnson published his *Lives of the Poets*, in which he had harsh things to say about Lord Lyttelton and his poetry. By way of explanation Johnson told his confidant Hester Thrale,

... that dear Boothby is at my heart still. She would delight in that fellow Lyttelton's company though, [for] all that I could do; and I cannot forgive even his memory the preference given by a mind like hers.

Yet of course it is evidence of his feelings before her death, not twenty-five years after, that would be most persuasive that if he were to have married again, she would have been his choice. What we know of this we know largely from two sources, Hester Thrale's account and her publication of some of Johnson's letters to Hill Boothby, and a curious little book entitled *An Account of the Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson, from His Birth to His Eleventh Year, Written by Himself to which we added Original Letters to Dr. Samuel Johnson, by Miss Hill Boothby: From the MSS preserved by the Doctor; and now in the Possession of Richard Wright, Surgeon; Proprietor of the Museum of Antiquities, Natural and Artificial Curiosities* (1805). A very long title indeed, but important, as shall appear. The small number of surviving letters from Johnson to Hill Boothby, printed by Mrs. Thrale, is puzzling because Johnson had written to his friend Dr. Taylor, who may have introduced them, "Indeed, I never did exchange letters regularly but with dear Miss Boothby."



Very few copies of this slender volume were produced.

Reading these surviving letters we must be careful to separate their literal words from their context in seeking to understand the state of Johnson's heart in 1753. These few letters are dated between 30 December 1755 and 8 January 1756. Miss Boothby died 16 January 1756, and Johnson, writing to her in the weeks immediately before, knew death was imminent. Thus when he begins one letter "My Sweet Angel," and another "Dearest dear," or he writes:

You know Des Cartes' argument "I think therefore I am." It is as good a consequence "I write therefore I am alive." I might give another "I am alive therefore I love Miss Boothby," but that I hope our friendship may be of far longer duration than life,

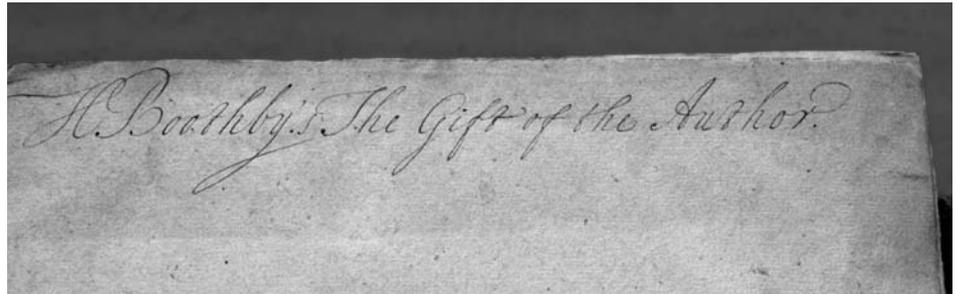
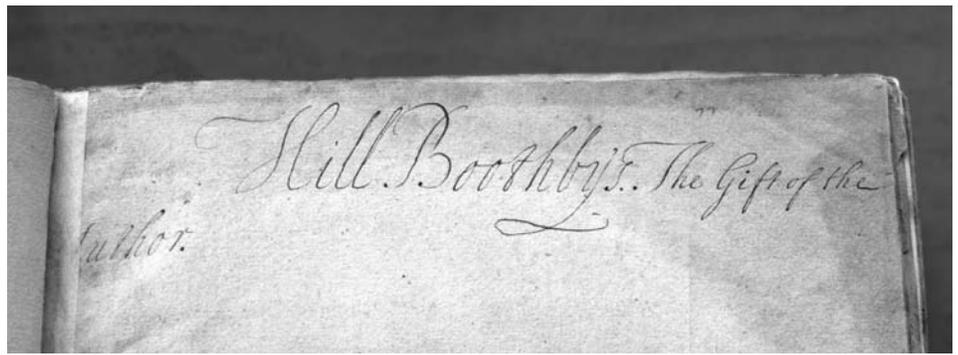
we must understand that these were not "love letters" of the courtship variety. Indeed for 1753, when he had first resolved to seek a new wife, we know little of the state of his relationship with her. We do know, however, that in that year she had undertaken responsibility for the management of her cousin's household and six children when his wife, her close friend, died and he became a widower. Perhaps Johnson moved too slowly then, but having accepted the responsibil-

ity for the Fitzherbert family in 1753, Miss Boothby was not one to abandon it.

We do also have a printed record, contained in the book the lengthy title of which you now have, of 32 letters she wrote to Johnson. The 1805 editor, Dr. Wright, tells us that the letters "... were all numbered and labeled by [Johnson] himself, and are bound together in a thin quarto volume." Alas, as we shall see for my purposes, that thin volume appears to be lost. The earliest of her letters to him reprinted there is dated July of 1753, and the last December of 1755. They are warm and affectionate, yet reserved and respectful. Much talk of religion and religious duty, much inquiry about mutual friends, much about her health, his health, her six Fitzherbert charges—they "can make as much noise as any six children in England"—interspersed with inquiries about the progress of his great *Dictionary*—but while fitting the pattern of a deep and intimate friendship, they contain no hint that marriage, if it had been on Johnson's mind, weighed at all on hers.

No matter for me as a collector. Johnson did not marry her; did not remarry at all. As certain as this is, is that he cared greatly for her and about her, and that he gave her a copy of his *Dictionary* when it was published in 1755. Was the one offered me by Dr. Curwen that very book? The evidence was very strong. In Prof. Fleeman's *A Preliminary Hand list of Copies of Books associated with Dr. Samuel Johnson* (Oxford 1984), we find a reference to a first edition of the dictionary: "Pres. SJ to Hill Boothby, with inscriptions by her." Fleeman notes its appearance in Maggs catalogue 244 (1909), offered for £5.5s, but also says it is, in 1984, "unlocated." In Miss Boothby's letter to Johnson dated July 4, 1755, printed in the 1805 *Account*, she had written "The great Dictionary is placed in full view, on a desk in my own room." Thus we can be sure Johnson gave her a copy, and she received it. Is it Dr. Curwen's copy?

The easiest way to determine that would be to compare the inscriptions in the front of each volume to known copies of her handwriting. And this is where things stalled. Before Bob Barry could fairly appraise the value of this particular copy he wanted to determine whether the inscriptions were, in fact, in Miss Boothby's hand. Fleeman had said they were, but he hadn't seen the book and relied



Inscriptions in the first (top) and second volumes of the Dictionary

on Maggs' catalogue. Bob Barry's search for Miss Boothby's signature and letters began in May of 2006 when Dr. Curwen, on my advice, called him, but stretched on over the next year. He consulted with the British Library, with the great collections at Harvard and at Yale, with expert Johnsonian scholars. I myself advertised in "The Johnsonian Newsletter." I pursued a tip over the internet that Leiden University had a letter by her, but they reported they did not. I checked with all the collectors I know. I contacted the Samuel Johnson House Museum in Lichfield, and searched the internet for records of Dr. Wright and his Museum of Antiquities, where the title page of his 1805 *Account* reported that the manuscripts of Miss Hill Boothby's letters to Johnson,—that "thin quarto volume," was said to reside. Dead ends, all. Dr. Wright's "museum," or at least some of it, was dispersed in 1821, and its contents appear untraceable, although it is not clear that the thin quarto volume was among them in that year. The source of Wright's collection had been a similarly named museum of his grandfather, an apothecary and antiquary named Richard Greene, of Lichfield. Greene was a friend of Johnson's; both Boswell and Johnson visited the museum in Lichfield, and contributed to its support. The catalogues of Greene's museum issued in 1773 and 1782, and that issued by a subsequent owner in 1801, list numerous "Antiquities, natural and artificial

curiosities," but include no mention of the letters, although it is unlikely they would (certainly in the two earlier ones), given that Johnson himself lived until 1784. If there is an example of Miss Hill Boothby's signature or handwriting extant, neither Bob Barry nor I could find it.

What we did find is that D'Arcy Curwen of Philips Exeter Academy acquired his copy of the *Dictionary* around 1957. A colleague of his at Exeter identified Miss Boothby for him. In 1962 Fritz Liebert, the great Yale rare-book librarian and Johnson collector, referred to it as "the presentation copy." Always a scholar and man of caution, Bob Barry concluded that perhaps Johnson, in London, had simply asked his publisher to have a copy delivered to Miss Boothby at Tissington House in Derbyshire, and the inscription was in the hand of the publisher's clerk. This might somewhat diminish the fair market value of the book, if it were so, although not its value to me. And so Bob set a price on the conservative assumption that the inscriptions are not in her hand; Dr. Curwen and I agreed it was fair, and the two volumes are now mine.

This is not, however, the end of the story. Recently I delivered a talk to The Club of Odd Volumes in Boston, an ancient and honorable bibliophilic group, in its anachronistic male-only membership, more like Rowfant than Caxton. Among their generous gifts to me that evening was a "Cata-

See BOOTHBY GIFT, page 4

logue of an Exhibition of Literary Material Pertaining to Doctor Johnson & James Boswell-Held by the Club of Odd Volumes May 14-23 1928." The introduction tells me that all of the books on display came from libraries of members of the club. No. 12 is identified as "The Dictionary. London, 2 vols., 1755. Presentation copy from Johnson to Miss Hill Boothby." The introduction also observes,

A few volumes are notable for their condition, as witness, among others, the uncut copies of *London*, the *Dictionary* (this being an association copy as well), the *Rambler*, and *Boswell's Life*.

This is both encouraging and discouraging. We know Maggs sold the book in 1909. We know that a book meeting the Maggs' description was owned by someone in Boston in 1928. Unfortunately, the Odd Volumes catalogue describes it as "uncut," and my copy is surely not uncut. On the other hand, it has been rebacked—by a famous Boston binder, Bob Barry believes, who would only have been 28 or 29 in 1928, perhaps before he would have been entrusted with such a unique volume. We know D'arcy Curwen just outside Boston had a book, also described as Miss Hill Boothby's copy, in 1957. It is likely, I conclude, from the condition of the boards, that the book was in pretty bad shape in

1928, and when it was rebacked, sometime after 1928, it was probably trimmed as well.

Another bit of persuasive evidence that my dictionary set indeed is the one Johnson gave to Miss Boothby is found in Volume I. Focused on authenticating the handwriting as hers, Bob Barry had not mentioned that two additional leaves are bound in the front of that volume. They contain several things. First, a printed letter from the antiquary Henry Smedley, dated 1831, explaining how he had commissioned the creation of a facsimile of a letter from Johnson recognizing the award of his honorary M.A. degree from Oxford. A facsimile of the degree itself, and a transcription of Johnson's letter, are also included. More to my purposes, however, is a paste-down of a letter from Smedley, also dated 1831, sending along the facsimiles. It is addressed to "Miss Fitzherbert." The Fitzherberts, of course, are the family whose care Hill Boothby assumed on the death of the matriarch in 1753. It seems more than likely that this copy of the *Dictionary* stayed in the Fitzherbert family well after Miss Boothby's death in 1756. Perhaps the "Miss Fitzherbert" addressed by Smedley in 1831 had been one of the six noisy charges Hill Boothby oversaw in the last years of her life.

This discovery convinced me that I had the right book, but it also sent me back to Dr. Wright's 1805 account and description of Miss Hill Boothby's letters. I read, not

for the first time, but for the first time with care, a footnote. It observes:

A Hebrew Grammar, or the sketch of one, composed for her own use, and *written in a beautiful character*, has been preserved by Miss Boothby's family, as a distinguished testimony of her literary attainments. (emphasis added)

Thus—not her handwriting, but a description of it. And then, looking at a history of Lichfield during Johnson's lifetime, I found both a picture of Tissington, the Fitzherbert country seat where Hill Boothby lived, and, in an extended description of her life, the following: "...her handwriting was especially admired..."

Looking again at the inscriptions "Hill Boothby The Gift of the author," and "H. Boothby The Gift of the Author," I was struck at once by the "beautiful character" of the hand. A publisher's clerk? Not likely, I now think. Such an inscription would not have been in such an elaborate hand, and would more likely have begun, "To Miss..." It would also most likely have been identical in both volumes. I believe she signed these books from her dear and famous friend herself, proudly, with her own name writ large in her own fine hand, linking herself, and the books, to Dr. Samuel Johnson, LL.D., and after 252 years, to me.

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All photographs from books in the author's collection, photographed by Robert McCamant.

Club Notes

Membership Report, April-May 2007

1. Newly elected members:

Ann Keil wrote an especially charming application letter, including the following: "My collection of books began with the purchase of a signed Winston Churchill that I bought from Titles on a 12 month installment plan. By the time the year was up I not only owned Churchill but, more importantly, had talked Florence Shay [proprietress of Titles, Inc. in Highland Park] into hiring me for one day a week. It has been the greatest job I've had; while I've found that while I can't buy every book that I want, I can at least keep them company for a while." Ann's interests include children's books, travel, humor, Chicago, etiquette, medical issues related to fungi,

and, of course, Churchill. Ann has been a long-time supporter of the Caxton Club through participation in the annual Revels and Auction. Nominated by Florence Shay, seconded by Bob Brooks.

Michelle Miller Burns is not only a lover of books, but someone who is an important steward of their acquisition, preservation, and availability as a resource to the Chicago community. After working for 15 years at the Chicago Symphony, most recently as Director of Planned Giving, Michelle has joined the Newberry Library as Vice President for Development. Her deep interest in the mission and role of Caxton Club has been apparent to those of us who have met her. More an accumulator than a collector, Michelle inclines to cook-books, mysteries, and novels by southern authors. Nominated by Tom Swanstrom, seconded by Susan Hanes.

2. During summer, there will be no regular luncheon and dinner meetings of the Caxton Club. But this hiatus provides a good opportunity to utilize the collecting interests guide assembled earlier this year by the late Carolyn Quattrocchi and Dan Crawford. This four-page guide, an initiative of Junie Sinson's presidency, lists nineteen broad interest areas of our members, with names. Why not consider hosting a gathering for Caxtonians who share your collecting/reading interests? If you have such a gathering and invite non-members, let me know and I'll be happy to provide sample copies of the *Caxtonian* and membership brochures. As always, I will also mail materials to any of your friends who you think might make good additions to the membership.

—Dan "Skip" Landt, Membership Chair
skiplandt@sbcglobal.net, 773-604-4115

CAXTONIAN FOOTNOTES

WYNKEN WONDERS if anyone remembers a Chicago bookseller named John Mandick? Does anyone remember *AB Bookman's Weekly*? It was so 20th century. It was the primary means through which decades of booksellers matched books for sale with books wanted. It was a primary cause of oculists putting their children through college from the steady demand for new glasses from book dealers who faithfully scanned the hundred or more double-columned pages of books for sale and books wanted.

Wynken recalls vividly the first time he heard about desktop computers—affordable personal computers—with database search functionality. I was nearly thrown to the floor from the Saul-like flash of realization that here, surely, was a tool that would eliminate the tedium and eyestrain of scrutinizing those weekly issues of *AB*. (In retrospect, it may have been a Faustian bargain to exchange the chore with the instant on-demand world-wide access of the world-wide web).

I have before me a time capsule in the form of the May 1-8, 1972 double issue of *AB Weekly*. It remarks on the then-upcoming 1972 Conference of the American Library Association, and the Pre-Conference meeting of the Rare Books & Manuscripts section at Chicago in June that year.

Four years later, the next ALA RBMS meeting in Chicago was the proximate cause for Chicago's First International Antiquarian Book Fair, which was held at The Prudential Building (old-timers recall when that was the tallest building in the city—does that make you feel antiquarian?).

The Obituary Notes column of this issue quotes extensively from the correspondence of local antiquarian John Mandick. I never knew him. Heck, I do not recall having so much as learned of him until now. But I wish I had known him. He had spunk! Herewith excerpts from his letters.

"... just completed moving my books to a new location and now am going to the hospital for an operation (clogged arteries)."

"I left my left leg up to the knee with the hospital. I'm getting along pretty good on my crutches and tomorrow I am going to be fitted for an artificial limb."



Frontispiece of the Jay Marshall magic collection catalog

"Cannot scout for books until I get my prosthesis and learn how to use it."

"...Have about 27,000 books and only about half of them are indexed so I have plenty to do to keep myself occupied. I have to get this job done before winter because the books are in garages and I cannot afford to freeze my right foot."

"While I was in the hospital they took my 1950 Mercury off the street as a deserted car. So now I must go hunting for some of the titles you're asking me for... I had plenty help in moving my books, but you need a bookman to arrange them properly and this I did not have."

"Tomorrow a.m. I am going to have my other leg amputated. I'll have to find some way of buying books to replenish my depleting stock."

Sol Malkin, the editor and founder of *AB Weekly*, commented, "Yes, we did meet John once, and he was very quiet and reserved."

Sol's successor, Jake Chernofsky, did not have a Saul-like intuition about the personal computer and world-wide web. Perhaps it was an age thing, or a Luddite response, but Jake continued to believe that print and paper would be a vital component to searching for out-of-print books. He was wrong. By the time Jake and his associates responded to the challenge, and the plunge in subscribers, it was weakly. It fatally involved keeping a print version that could be previewed over the internet by those with computers, yet still read by those anchored to post office and paper.

Like John Mandick, Jake was "cut off at the knees."

Caxtonians who attended the 2005 wake of **Jay Marshall** ('79)—a man who rarely took himself too seriously—reported a sign mounted in the vicinity of Jay's casket that read, more or less, "Don't worry. I have died many times before."

In the lengthy process of disposing of Jay's accumulations, one venture featured a catalogued sale of Marshall-ana which was put up for auction during the annual meeting of the Magic Collectors Association, in Schaumburg this year. The Introduction to the catalogue, penned by **David Meyer** ('81), told how Jay had been wont to attend auctions of magic memorabilia both here and abroad. It was common for Jay to sit in the front row and bid on nearly every lot, but rarely win one. Wynken imagines that Jay's spirit was again in the front row, and Jay bagged his usual limit.

A group of Jay's special plaid sport coats were sold. Some or all of them were custom-designed to permit prestidigitators to produce illusions. That would be fun to wear to a party!

The hundreds of lots garnered in the neighborhood of \$300,000, which will be escrowed for Jay's survivors. Chris McNamara, writing for the *Chicago Tribune*, deadpanned that Jay had "one final trick performed from beyond the grave: making hundreds of thousands of dollars disappear. Poof!"

A final encore: **Adam Muhlig** ('07) had organized a sale of other Marshall-ana last March, which included a large number of puppets. There were numerous 'families' of Punch and Judy puppets. I think this was part of an homage by Jay to his father, Frank Marshall, who was a Chicago puppet maker, who had a specialty in Punch and Judy characters. Boomer Caxtonians will smile to learn that Frank Marshall had carved the head for Farfel, the puppet dog of puppet boy Danny O'Day, handled by Jimmy Nelson. Farfel was a spokesman for Nestlé's Quik chocolate mix from 1953 to 1965. Curiously, like Jay Marshall, Farfel and Jimmy Nelson were frequently seen on the old Ed Sullivan Show.

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Book and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by John Blew

(Note: on occasion an exhibit may be delayed or extended; it is always wise to call in advance of a visit)

“Origins of Color” (explores the historic and scientific development of pigments and dyes and their production and uses in both fine art and craft manufacture) at the John Crerar Library of the University of Chicago, 5730 South Ellis Avenue, Chicago 773-702-7715 (closes 2 November 2007)

“Typing for Tomorrow: Modernism and Typography in the Collection of the Ryerson and Burnham Libraries” (features periodicals, books and exhibition catalogues that highlight the Modernist romance with the typographical arts, including work by such artists as László Moholy-Nagy, Theo van Doesburg, Kurt Schwitters, and El Lissitzky)

at the Ryerson and Burnham Libraries of the Art Institute of Chicago, 111 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago 312-443-3671 (closes 31 July 2007)

“Black Jewel of the Midwest: Celebrating 75 years of the George Cleveland Hall Branch Library and the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection,” spotlighting their roles in the cultural flowering of the Chicago Renaissance and the Black Arts Movement (includes books, manuscripts, photographs, and ephemera, many of which have never before been exhibited, from the Harsh Collection, one of the finest institutional collections

anywhere of African-American history and literature) at the Woodson Regional Library of the Chicago Public Library, 9525 South Halsted Street, Chicago 312-747-6900 (closes 31 December 2007)

“John James Audubon: The Birds of America, Prints from the Collection of the Illinois State Museum” (includes more than 30 Audubon prints, mostly from the Bien edition, together with a number of landmark 18th and 19th century ornithologic plate

books), Illinois State Museum Gallery, 2nd floor, Thompson Center, 100 West Randolph Street, Chicago 312-814-5322 (closes 24 August 2007)

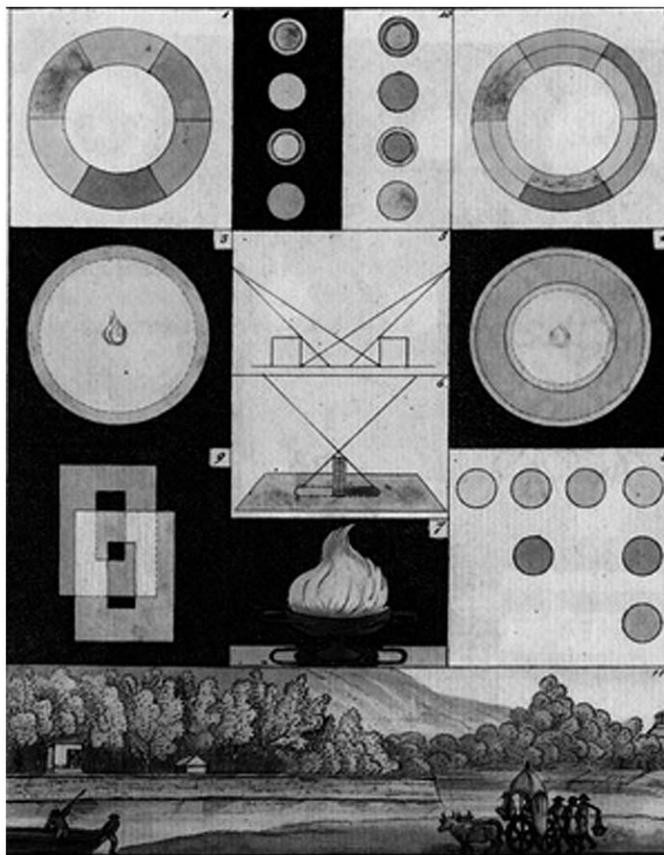
“Happy 300th Birthday Linnaeus” (rare books from the Library’s collections showing Linnaeus’ contributions to plant classification) in the Lenhardt Library at the Chicago Botanic Garden, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe 847-835-8202 (closes 22 July 2007)

“Inspired by Nature: the Picturesque Landscape Garden” (rarely displayed antiquarian books and art from the Library’s collection, featuring the work of four important landscape architects: Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown, Humphry Repton, Frederick Law Olmsted and Jens Jensen) at the Sterling Morton Library, The Morton Arboretum, 4100 Illinois Route 53, Lisle, IL 630-968-0074 (closes 1 August 2007)

“Building the Future City: Past Visions” (a small exhibit featuring maps, plans, manuscript

materials, publications and photographs from the collections of UIC Special Collections and the UIC Archives Department that document past visions of improvements and grand plans for Chicago) at the Richard J. Daley Library (first floor lobby case) of the University of Illinois at Chicago, 801 South Morgan, Chicago 312-996-2742 (closes 17 August 2007)

Members who have information about current or forthcoming exhibitions that might be of interest to Caxtonians, please call or e-mail John Blew (312-807-4317, e-mail: jblew@bellboyd.com).



Origins of Color, Crerar Library at University of Chicago
JOHANN VON GOETHE. ERKLÄRUNG DER ZU GOETHE'S FARBENLEHRE GEHÖRIGEN TAFELN, 1810.

LIEBSON, from page 7

very dangerous microbe. Before antibiotics, particularly bad strains could kill 90% of the victims exposed to it. And even today, with antibiotics administered in a timely fashion, 5 to 10% will not pull through.”

Although Liebson enjoys preparing talks

for the Chicago Literary Club, he says that frequently he finds Caxton Club meetings more enjoyable. For one thing, the tradition at the Caxton Club is to allow questions after a speaker has finished. (Chicago Literary forbids this, to avoid arguments.) He’s always impressed by the questions Caxto-

nians ask. For another thing, “Caxtonians seem to be more varied in their interests. You can never guess what you’ll discover you have in common with a Caxtonian until you sit next to him or her at dinner.”

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Caxtonians Collect: Philip Liebson

Thirty-second in a series of interviews with members

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

Philip Liebson discovered the Caxton Club by way of the Chicago Literary Club, where he has been a member since 1992. He is a man of many interests, but medieval history was the key in this case: he fell into conversation with Ed Quattrocchi at Chicago Literary Club, and discovered their common curiosity about the period. When Jim Tomes also joined Chicago Literary Club, and Liebson discovered Quattrocchi's and Tomes' membership in the Caxton Club, he was intrigued. Tomes invited him to attend, and in 2004 he joined. This fall he joins the Caxton council.

Liebson is by trade a physician, specifically an academic specializing in preventive cardiology. He has been employed since 1972 at Rush University Medical Center, after being an undergraduate at Columbia University and studying medicine at Cornell and other New York institutions. He lives in Wilmette with his wife, Carole.

Liebson has always loved books. He told me a number of "first" book stories:

—Norman Cantor's *Inventing the Middle Ages*, first published in 1991, set him off on his quest to understand the medieval period.

—Pollock and Maitland's 1896 *History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I* introduced him to the concept of original sources, which are more useful when trying to understand a long-ago period than are the opinions of intervening historians.

—Paul de Kruif's 1926 *Microbe Hunters* introduced him to the excitement of medicine. He read it at the age of 12 when he dis-

covered it in the library of an uncle's Sandy Hook, Connecticut, bungalow. (It tells the story of Pasteur, Koch, and others who pioneered in linking microbes to human disease.)

Liebson can still remember the smell



of books in his uncle's bungalow. "The olfactory sense is tightly interwoven with memory," he explains. The bungalow was a home-away-from-home when he was a student; he thinks he can recall the smell of Stanley Walker's *The Night Club Era*, a look at life during Prohibition, which he read at the bungalow.

Though he estimates he has 3000 books, on the continuum between those members who collect books to read to those who collect books to possess them, Liebson is clearly on the far end toward reading. He compartmentalizes his busy life to make time for practicing the piano (he's working with a teacher on a Chopin ballade) and for reading (typically 1 to 2 hours per day). He enjoys the structure provided by a manageable goal: working on a Chicago Literary Club talk (he's done a dozen or so) is just the ticket to keep his attention focused. "Small achievements are very satisfying," he explains.

Much of what he reads these days is about the Middle Ages and current and recent past Middle Eastern history. "The medieval period, in particular the Crusades, is very relevant to the times we live in. Because we have distance from those

times we can look at them more objectively than we can at current events," he says. "The conflicts are the same: between Christians and Moslems, between Moslems and Jews, between the secular and the believing." On this topic, Liebson particularly recommends Richard Southern's *Making of the Middle Ages* (1953), a concise guide to the main personalities and influences that molded the history of Western Europe

from the late 10th to early 13th century.

In his professional career, Liebson's specialty has led him to appreciate the relationship of lifestyle and health. "Of the patients I see in my office, fully 70% are overweight. The risk factors that produce symptoms that lead them to see me as a specialist—weight, blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, lack of exercise—are all things that should be treated by primary care physicians. My research is focused on proving the links." One topic he has been exploring is the problem of left ventricular hypertrophy, the thickening of the left ventricle that occurs in some, but not all, patients with high blood pressure. Is it just a secondary effect of the heightened blood pressure, or does it have a role in causing heart attacks?

But his medical interests are catholic as well. He confesses to having read 6 or 7 books on what is variously called the Black Death or The Plague. "*Yersinia pestis* is a

See LIEBSON, page 6

Doing Research at the de Grummond Collection

Children's literature at the University of Southern Mississippi at Hattiesburg

Suzanne Smith
Pruchnicki

As we've done for the past two winters, Paul and I escaped the below-zero Illinois weather by traveling to benign Mississippi where the superb de Grummond Kate Greenaway collection of thousands of items beckoned.

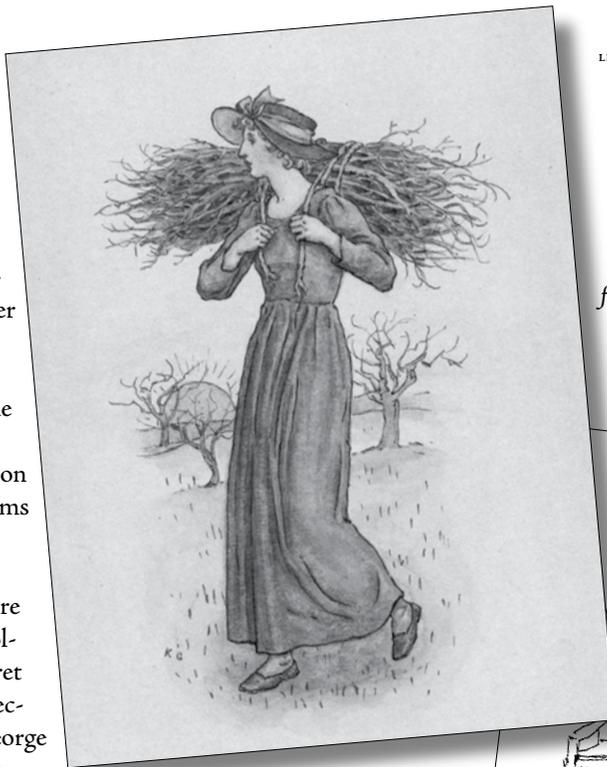
In addition to Greenaway, there are two other major collections: the Margret and H.A. Rey collection of Curious George books... 332 titles in English and foreign languages plus all the original drawings for them! The third collection contains all the original illustrations, books, art equipment, Art library, correspondence of Ezra Jack Keats.

The woman responsible for these collections and the many others was Ms. de Grummond, a library science professor who began the university archives in 1966. She wrote to living illustrators or to their estates and, in the case of Kate Greenaway, to Greenaway collectors. It was Ms. de Grummond's manner of teaching the process of creating children's books.

The collection contains 100,000 books, illustrations, letters, scripts, and color separations—of 1,200 authors.

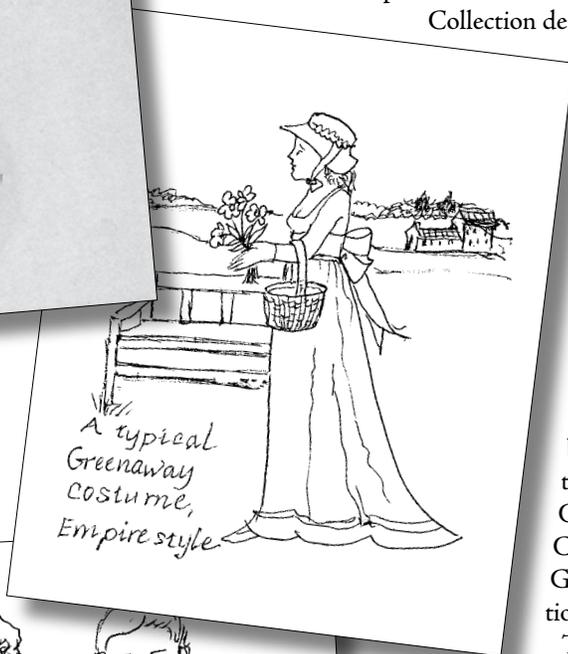
These riches may be researched at the Cleanth Brooks Reading Room of the McCain Library (itself named after a former university president.) A welcoming staff awaited me... courteous, knowledgeable and unfailingly helpful.

Ellen Raffin, curator, was a librarian and familiar with all of the collections. Peggy Price is head of Special Collections. Kalani Hoffman is a specialist on Mississippians, on books about the State and those



LEFT: Greenaway image from notecard set offered by the Collection.

BELOW: Sketches by the author from materials in the Collection



published by the University Press, the major Mississippi Press. Jennifer Brannock majored in Art History and earned a library science degree. She spent academic

year 2003-04 at Yale on a Kress Fellowship in Art Librarianship. She worked with arts-of-the-book collection at Yale, organized the book-plate collection and created an exhibit on book plates. All of these women were competent and discreetly helpful. My several days at the Archives were tremendously informative and pleasurable.

I must add: students at this University were most friendly, maybe the most courteous and helpful I have met.

In specific detail, the Kate Greenaway Collection de Grummond

assembled is well-known and consists of hundreds of Greenaway's pencil drawings, water colors and a number of remarkable wood engravings of Greenaway's illustrations executed by Edmund Evans, the prints of Walter Crane, Randolph Caldecott's and Kate Greenaway's illustrations in color.

There are also small almanacs illustrated by Greenaway, along with small purse-size and larger calendars. Hundreds of "trade-cards" bear Greenaway book illustrations on their front sides with advertisements on the back. There are also Greenaway manuscripts, notes and letters, verses and moving poetry. Another acid-free box contains articles, spanning a hundred years, about Kate Greenaway illustrations. There was an interesting box that contained letters from American book shops, from English book dealers and English libraries. These were written

to a Mrs. McPhail who was evidently a major Greenaway collector.

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