

The Whirligig of Time Brings Its Revenge

And other tales of Chicago club life

Edward A. Quattrochi

As a recent member of the Chicago Literary Club, and a mature member of the Caxton Club, I have become aware of the similarities and differences between these two Chicago institutions. Both have interesting and varied histories, which intersect at significant points. But surprisingly, both have had interconnecting relationships with the University Club of Chicago that suggest historical antecedents in medieval England. I will begin with a brief review of the history of the clubs, but the main point of my paper is to describe the architectural linkage between them and medieval London.

All three Chicago clubs were founded within a 21-year period at the close of the 19th century. This period of ferment in Chicago resulted in part from the rebuilding of the city after the Great Chicago Fire in 1871. It is a tribute to the energy and vision of the founders of the Chicago Literary Club that it met for the first time three years after the fire. In the period leading up to the Columbian Exposition in 1893 several seminal institutions in the development of the city were founded. Particularly the Newberry Library and the John Crerar Library have had a long and close association with both the Chicago Literary Club and the Caxton Club.

The first librarian of the Newberry Library, Dr. William Frederick Poole, was

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A recently shared interior photo of Crosby Hall in London, now a part of a private home.

president of the Literary Club for the year 1879-'80 and read ten papers between 1875- and 1893. John Crerar, a beloved member of the Literary Club for ten years, read four papers, and bequeathed \$2,600,000 to establish the John Crerar Library as well as \$10,000 to the Literary Club.

From their beginnings the Chicago Literary Club, the Caxton Club, and the University Club have been connected in time, place and personalities. The University Club was founded in 1888, 14 years after the Literary Club. It occupied a building at 116 Dearborn before moving into its current baronial quarters down the street at Monroe and Michigan in 1908. For the

first 18 years of its existence, the Literary Club met in seven different locations before moving to the University Club building on Dearborn in 1892. In 1895, three years after the Literary Club took up quarters in the University Club building, the Caxton Club was founded. It met in the same University Club building where the Literary Club had already taken up residence.

That the Caxton Club should also find quarters in the University Club was surely no coincidence, for six of the original founding members of the Caxton Club were also members of the Chicago Literary Club. James W. Elsworth, who joined the Literary Club in 1894, was the

See CROSBY AND CATHEDRAL HALLS, page 2



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Caxton Club, Founded 1895

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CROSBY AND CATHEDRAL HALLS, from page 1

first President of the Caxton Club. Among his many other contributions to arts and letters, Elsworth brought to Chicago its first Gutenberg Bible, which he purchased at auction for \$14,800. It was only the second copy to come to the United States and is now in the Princeton University Library. George Armour, who had been a member of the Literary Club since 1880, was elected the first vice president of the Caxton Club. Charles Hutchinson devoted much of his life to service and philanthropy, and especially to the Caxton Club and the Literary Club. As one of the founders of the Caxton Club, he organized its first exhibition at the Art Institute, and served as treasurer, vice-president and president before the turn of the century. A member of the Literary Club since 1884, he read 17 papers between 1887 and 1923. He was a stalwart in both clubs until his death in 1925. Other founders of the Caxton Club who were also members of the Literary Club were Edward Ayer and Martin Ryerson.

Another distinguished member of both clubs was Frederick Gookin. I am indebted to Gookin's *History of the First Fifty Years of the Chicago Literary Club*, published in 1926, and Frank Piehl's *The Caxton Club 1895-1995*, published in its centenary year of 1995, for facts that I have gathered for this paper. In 1897 Caxtonian Frederick Gookin gave a talk in conjunction with an exhibition of his collection of Japanese color prints. This event was something of a milestone in the sexist history of both clubs, for the council passed a resolution "that members be at liberty to bring wives." Thus a precedent was established that was to continue with both clubs holding occasional joint "ladies night" meetings. But alas! it was not until 1976 that women were accepted as members of the Caxton Club; and not until 1993 during the presidency of Ralph Fujimoto that the Chicago Literary Club admitted its first woman.

Both the Caxton Club and the Literary Club changed locations several times in the succeeding decades. The Caxton Club moved to new quarters in the Fine Arts Building in 1899 while the Literary Club remained at the University Club. In 1906 the Literary Club moved to the Orchestra Hall Building at 168 Michigan, where it held meetings until 1910. In that year the Literary Club and the Caxton Club made arrangements with the Fine Arts Building for joint occupancy. On October 31, 1910, the Literary Club celebrated its occupying new quarters by holding a ladies' night reception to which members of the Caxton Club and their distaff companions were invited.

Thus were the Literary Club, the Caxton Club, and the University Club tied together from their beginnings, not only by joint memberships but also by close physical proximity in the places they held meetings. From then till now many members of one club have belonged to one or more of the others.

But the ties that bind these organizations go back even further in time and in place. Let me begin to trace the lines of descent from the present time back to medieval England with a few historical facts about the University Club building. It was built in 1909, during a period when Chicago architecture was establishing itself as world-class. On the ninth floor is the mammoth Cathedral Hall, the main dining room for the University Club as well as the site of luncheons and dinners for scholars and visiting luminaries for almost a century. Many Caxtonians and Literary Club members were among its first patrons.

Cathedral Hall. Although Chicagoans as well as visitors from around the world have been dining in this hall for almost a hundred years, few are aware of the inspiration of its design. Its historic ties with medieval England are little recognized except for those of its patrons who take the trouble to wonder about the Gothic design of the dining room. Moreover it is a well-kept secret, even among Shakespeare and Thomas More scholars, that this landmark was inspired by Crosby Hall in London, once belonging to King Richard III as well as to Thomas More.

Cathedral Hall was designed by the architect Martin Roche, a principal in the architectural firm of Holabird and Roche, famed for its influence in the development of early skyscrapers, especially the architectural movement known as the "Chicago School." The University Club itself is surrounded by other buildings designed by Holabird and Roche. To the south across the street is the Monroe building; to the north the famous trio of the Cage Group, and to the west the Champlain building. Several other significant buildings in downtown Chicago designed by the firm have been designated as Chicago landmarks.

In preparation for his design of Cathedral Hall, Martin Roche visited England and steeped himself in the English collegiate Gothic style of architecture. In particular he studied and contemplated the design of Crosby Hall in London. When he visited London, Crosby Hall stood on its original site in Bishopgate, though it was not destined to remain there. While Cathedral Hall was being constructed in Chicago, the owners of a bank in London were about to demolish Crosby to make room for an office building. Public



Cathedral Hall as depicted today on the University Club Chicago web site.

opinion could not dissuade the bank from building its new offices on the site, but forced it to finance the moving of Crosby Place from its Bishopgate location to Thomas More's garden in Chelsea.

About the time Crosby Hall was relocated in Chelsea and Cathedral Hall was being constructed in Chicago, the muse of a great American writer, Henry James, inspired him to lament the unsettling events of his day. The history of Crosby Hall and the conjunction of that history with Chicago were natural material for treatment by Henry James in its long historical reach and international connections. We have pieces of it in James's own voice in his essay titled "Refugees in Chelsea," the title of which puns on two kinds of refugees and two kinds of war. In 1914 James described the sheltering of hundreds of Belgian World War I refugees in Crosby Hall, then situated in Chelsea near where James lived on the Thames Embankment. Crosby Hall was itself a refugee, having been dismantled from its original site in the old City of London and moved down the Thames to Chelsea, a refugee from the kind of global conflict that James knew best, that between progress and history. Here is how James describes the sad spectacle:

This great private structure, though of the grandest civic character, dating from the fifteenth century, and one of the noblest relics of the past that London could show, was held a few years back so to cumber the

precious acre or more on which it stood that it was taken to pieces in the candid commercial interest and in order that the site it had so long sanctified should be converted to such uses as would stuff out still further the ideal number of private pockets. Dismay and disgust were unable to save it, the most that could be done was to gather in with tenderness of, its innumerable constituent parts and convey them into safer conditions, where a sad defeated piety has been able to re-edify them into some semblance of the original majesty.

Several generations of dedicated English patriots made a formidable attempt to preserve this old landmark, one of the most famous in English history, but sadly, Crosby Hall today has been converted into a condominium. I revisited it last May and was depressed to see its original splendor emaciated by the developers' ruinous hands. But until recently it has been famous for its association with some of the great poets, kings, courtiers, statesmen, and villains in English history, chief among them King Richard III, Thomas More and William Shakespeare.

Its history begins in 1470 when John Crosby built his mansion, then the largest building in London. He lived in the house for only five years until his death in 1475. With the death of King Edward IV in 1483, his brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, took possession and used it as his London residence before succession to

the crown as Richard III. Richard maneuvered Edward's widow, Queen Elizabeth, into releasing her two sons, King Edward and his younger brother, Prince Richard, from sanctuary in the Tower. Richard, the Protector, sent the Queen's allies to a conference at Baynard Castle and withdrew with his counselors to Crosby Place. Thomas More records this event in his *History of Richard III*: "All folke withdrew from the Tower, and drew unto Crosbies place in Bishops gates street where the protector kept his household." According to More, and the Tudor view of Richard's reign that he perpetrated, the Protector plotted the murders of his two nephews at

Crosby Place.

Shakespeare used Thomas More's *History* as the main source for his *The Tragedy of Richard III*, and he makes Crosby Place more conspicuous in the action of the narrative than does More. Whereas More mentions Crosby Place only once in his book, Shakespeare mentions it three times in his play. The first reference occurs in the second scene of the play. The time is shortly after the Battle of Tewkesbury, in which the Lancastrian King Henry VI and his son, Prince Edward, were slain by Richard, under the banner of his brother, King Edward IV. As Prince Edward's widow Anne escorts the body of King Henry VI in a funeral procession, Richard suddenly halts the entourage and forces his affection upon her. Anne is initially repulsed and rails at Richard for murdering her husband and father-in-law. But Richard is undaunted.

He displays not an iota of remorse; instead he proceeds to woo the widow, Anne, and audaciously invites her to go home with him to Crosby Place. Here is his unconscionable proposition:

That it may please you leave these sad designs
To him that hath most cause to be a mourner,
And presently repair to Crosby Place;
Where (after I have solemnly interr'd
At Chertsey monastery this noble king,
And wet his grave with my repentant tears)
I will with all expedient duty see you.

—*I ii 206-216, Riverside Shakespeare*

See CROSBY AND CATHEDRAL HALLS, page 4

That is what I would call genuine chutzpah. This is one of the most memorable scenes in the play, and one of the most outlandish in Shakespeare's entire canon.

If Shakespeare could be credited, the historical setting of this scene would establish the date of Richard's residency at Crosby Place as early as 1471. This is good theater but hardly adheres to the historical facts. Prince Edward was slain at the battle of Tewkesbury in 1471, and King Henry was executed shortly thereafter, but not the way Shakespeare would have it. Richard fought valiantly at the battle of Tewkesbury, but he did not personally kill Edward or his father, Henry, and it is highly unlikely that he attended King Henry's funeral. Moreover, he would not have invited Anne to "repair to Crosby Place," in 1471. At that time John Crosby was living in his recently built mansion. But Shakespeare was writing drama, not recording history.

John Crosby's history is interesting not only because he built a famous mansion, but also because of his probable connections with William Caxton. The biographies of William Caxton and John Crosby, and the history of Crosby Hall, are individually interesting in their own rights, but taken together with their connections with the cultural renaissance in Chicago at the end of the last century; they are indeed even more fascinating. It is historically, and even poetically, congruous that the University Club should have been founded in Chicago about eight years before the Caxton Club, for it is approximately that time span between the building of John Crosby's house and the beginning of William Caxton's printing business. About seven years after Crosby Hall was completed in 1470, Caxton set up shop about two miles away in Westminster Abbey and printed his first book in England, *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*.

Much more is known of William Caxton than of John Crosby. But in their own lifetimes Sir John Crosby was a better-known public figure than William Caxton. Crosby was born in 1410, and his lineage goes back at least one hundred years before that. After his death he became a folk hero, and the myth grew that he was an orphan, found at a crossroad, from whence comes his name, Crosby. He became a prosperous merchant from his dealing in commodities, mainly in wool. He traded mainly with the Low Countries, particularly with Bruges,



Interior view of Crosby Hall at no 36 Bishopsgate, City of London, 1819. Artist: Robert Blemmell.

Belgium, and Calais, France, which was at that time governed by England. These facts suggest that he knew and may well have dealt with William Caxton.

Prior to beginning his printing business (when he was past fifty), Caxton, like Crosby, dealt in commodities of various kinds. He spent most of his life before starting to print books in the Low Countries as a distinguished member of the Mercers Company. His fellow merchant adventurers sometime around 1462 elected him Governor of the English Nation in Bruges. The post of Governor at that time had considerable authority having to do with the regulation of trade between England and the Low Countries.

Caxton left his job of Governor of the English Nation in Bruges in 1470 and moved to Cologne, where he learned the printing craft. He returned to Bruges sometime in 1473 and there printed his first two books: *The History of Troy*, and *The Game and Play of Chess*. In 1476 he came back to England, after nearly 30 years on the continent, and set up his shop in Westminster Abbey.

During the crucial years between 1470 and 1475, when Caxton changed careers, John Crosby accumulated a considerable fortune. In 1466 as one of London's most influential citizens, Crosby began construction of his mansion. In that same year he was elected a Member of Parliament

for the City of London and shortly thereafter selected to be Auditor of the City. In 1468 he was elected Alderman, and in 1470, Sheriff. In that year his house was completed, becoming the largest and most sumptuous mansion in London. At that time, he was also appointed Mayor of the Staple of Calais--then in the possession of England-- a position of considerable importance in its day. The Merchant Staplers had the monopoly of exporting the principal raw commodities of England, especially wool, to all the lands England then held in France.

It is probable that John Crosby had dealings with Caxton in his capacity as the Governor of the English Nation in Bruges. Caxton had regular correspondence with both London and Calais about trade matters during those years. He knew, and was known by, nobility, diplomats and merchants who were also associates of Crosby. Toward the end of Caxton's tenure as Governor in 1469, for example, King Edward commissioned a delegation of diplomats and merchants, headed by Caxton and John Prout, Crosby's predecessor as Mayor of the Staple of Calais, to negotiate a trade agreement with the Duke of Burgundy.

When Caxton was relieved of his duties as Governor of the English Nation, John Crosby was nearing the end of his illustrious life and gaining fame and fortune up to his death in 1475. In 1471, King Edward IV had taken the throne from the Lancastrian

King Henry VI, but King Henry was only a puppet King, being completely dominated by his wife, Queen Margaret. She came back to England with Henry in tow to reclaim the throne. While King Henry's forces were engaged in battle with King Edward in the North, the bastard Faulconbridge mounted an assault on the City of London. John Crosby, as Sheriff, and a staunch Yorkist, organized the citizens to beat back the attackers, thus saving London from Faulconbridge's forces and securing the crown for Edward IV. For this heroic feat, Edward dubbed him a Knight in 1471.

From this time to the end of his life, John Crosby was an important figure in the administration of King Edward. In 1473 he embarked on a crucial diplomatic mission to Bruges, along with several key figures in

most notably Margaret of York, the sister of King Edward IV, of King Richard III, and of their brother, George, Duke of Clarence.

The delegation came to negotiate with Charles, Duke of Burgundy, who had married Margaret in 1468. Duke Charles and Margaret were not only important politically, but they also had a significant influence on Caxton and on the history of printing. Charles had one of the finest libraries in Europe at the time, and Margaret was a patroness of arts and letters. It was she who urged Caxton to translate from French his first printed book, the *History of Troy*, which he dedicated to her. And it was to Margaret's brother, George, that Caxton dedicated his second book, *The Game and Play of Chess*. This significant book in the history of English printing

Crosby Place as a setting in *Richard III*.

After his death, John Crosby's fame as a hero of London apparently grew for more than a hundred years. His popularity among the citizens of London can be surmised from a reading of a little-known play, entitled *Edward IV*, written by Thomas Heywood, and staged in London about the same time as Shakespeare's *King Richard III*. That was about 125 years after Crosby's death. The first three acts of *Edward IV* focus on the repulsion of Faulconbridge by the citizens of London, led by Mayor John Crosby, and one of his chief compatriots, and fellow merchants, William Shore. Not only do they save London from the assault by Faulconbridge, but they also preserve the virtue of Jane Shore, from Faulconbridge's lustful intentions.

The curious indication of how Crosby had become a folk hero is suggested in his being cast in the play as a major figure in the reign of Edward IV. He is given the title Lord Mayor of London, whereas in fact he was only Sheriff. The last two acts tell the story of the seduction of Jane Shore by King Edward. The second scene of the fourth act is set in Crosby Hall. The Lord Mayor, John Crosby, comes on stage in a scarlet gown with a gilt rapier by his side. In a long self-congratulatory soliloquy, he explains that some will marvel how a man of his humble background has risen to a position of such importance. He explains how an honest shoemaker found him near a crossroad and gave him the

name, Crosby. He thanks God, and ends his windy exposition:

*In Bishopgate Street, a poor house I have built,
And my name, have called it Crosby House.
And when God will take me from this life,
In little Saint Helen's will be buried.*

In this same scene the Mayor prepares a feast for the arrival of King Edward to celebrate the victory over Faulconbridge. Since Crosby is an old widower, he has recruited his niece, Jane Shore, as his stand-in

See CROSBY AND CATHEDRAL HALLS, page 6



Exterior of Crosby Hall today

Edward's court, to negotiate a trade agreement with representatives of the Hanseatic League. Several of the diplomatic delegation had known dealings with Caxton. One in particular, Hugh Bryce, a wealthy goldsmith, was a patron of one of Caxton's later books, *The Mirror of the World*, printed in 1481.

By the time the diplomatic delegation arrived in Bruges, Caxton was no longer Governor, but it was likely that he had returned to Bruges from Cologne. When Crosby's delegation came to Bruges, Caxton had many friends and connections there,

came from Caxton's press in 1475, the year of John Crosby's death.

I don't think it is very well known how closely connected with Caxton and the history of printing in England were the siblings of King Richard III – his sister Margaret, and his brother, George.

Crosby's will reveals that he was a rich and generous man. Among other bequests he left a considerable sum to St. Helen's parish, where he is buried. This church is famous, among other reasons, for being the parish church of William Shakespeare, which may account for the prominence of

hostess, along with her husband, William Shore. I have been able to discover no other evidence that Jane Shore was Crosby's niece, but the association is tantalizing. Jane Shore was one of the most famous concubines in English History, and the subject of one of England's most enduring folk songs.

She was Edward IV's favorite mistress, and apparently such a beautiful, witty, intelligent and winsome person that Thomas More, in his History of Richard III, could find very little fault in her. In fact, More praises Jane above King Edward's other two favorite mistresses: "The King would say that he had three concubines, who in three diverse properties, diversely excelled. One, the merriest; another, the wiliest; the third, the holiest harlot in the realm." More comments that the holiest is "one whom no one could get out of the church lightly to any place but it were to bed," but he does not name her. He does name the merriest, however, as Shore's wife, "in whom the King took special pleasure."

Because More's History was the chief source for Shakespeare's play, it has forever fixed in the Western consciousness the portrait of King Richard as a murderous tyrant deformed in body and soul. From

More's History Shakespeare developed the idea of Jane Shore as a witch, responsible for his withered arm. In one of the many memorable scenes in that play Richard uses Lord Hastings' liaison with Jane Shore as a pretext for chopping off his head. In the crucial scene in which Richard must find a pretext to execute Hastings, Richard bursts into a council meeting and accuses Hastings of consorting with Jane Shore to ruin him:

*Then be your eyes the witness of their evil
Look how I am bewitched; behold, mine*

arm

*Is like a blasted sapling, withered up;
And this is Edward's wife, that monstrous
witch,
Consorted with that harlot, strumpet Shore.
That by their witchcraft thus have marked
me.*
—III iv 67-72

Jane Shore's relationship with John Crosby is interesting not only because she is an engaging historical figure in her own right, but also because her relationship with Lord Hastings provides another link between Crosby and Caxton. Caxton surely knew Jane, because he knew her husband very well. In 1487 William Shore, apparently to avoid bankruptcy, made over his entire property to three friends including Caxton. Eleven years before that assign-

Bryce, as a London merchant, was apparently a close associate of Crosby and Shore as well as of Caxton.

Another indication of the perduring popularity of King Edward's favorite concubine, and the connection between William Shore and Lord Hastings with William Caxton, is suggested in another play by Nicholas Rowe, entitled Jane Shore, A Tragedy, written about one hundred years after Heywood's Edward IV.

Although Rowe's play can hardly be considered great literature, it provides another tidbit of evidence of the possible connections between William Caxton and John Crosby. If William Shore was a mercer in Antwerp, as the play indicates, he certainly would have been a close associate



In this scene from Twelfth Night, Malvolio courts a bemused Olivia, while Maria covers her amusement, in an engraving by R. Staines after a painting by Daniel Maclise.

ment, Pope Sixtus IV had obliged King Edward by annulling Jane's marriage on the grounds of the impotence of her husband. Edward showed his appreciation to William Shore, the complaisant husband, by granting him royal protection.

Lord Hastings became Jane's paramour after the death of King Edward and most probably before his death. Before Edward's death, about 1481, Hugh Bryce, a diplomatic colleague of John Crosby's, asked Caxton to print for him *The Mirror of the World*, which he intended as a gift for Lord Hastings. Hugh

of William Caxton, who had served so long as the Governor of the English Nation in Bruges. As Heywood's play clearly indicates, Crosby's chief lieutenant in the defense of London was William Shore. And Lord Hastings, the villain of the play, was indirectly responsible for the printing of one of Caxton's early books.

The story of Crosby Place after John Crosby's death in 1475 establishes it as one of the most famous landmarks in English history. Time will not permit a review of that history now, but a few of its subsequent illustrious owners and tenants are

immortally associated with the history and literature of England. Sometime around 1520 Thomas More, then Lord Chancellor, bought Crosby Hall and used it for a time as his London residence. It is possible, and if so, ironic, that More could have worked on the revision of his History of Richard III while he resided at Crosby Place. After owning it for only a couple of years, More sold it to his good friend the wealthy Italian merchant, Antonio Bonvisi. After More's death Bonvisi continued close relationship with More's family and friends, and in 1554 rented the place to John Roper, More's son-in-law, and the author of More's best known biography, and to William Rastell, More's nephew, and the editor of More's English Works, published by Richard Tottel in 1557. It is probable that in Crosby Hall William Rastell prepared the text of his uncle's works for publication. And it is, I think, appropriate that the best, and most famous work in that edition is The History of Richard III.

In 1908, the year the University Club building in Chicago was erected, Crosby Hall was taken down from its historic site in Bishopgate Street in London and rebuilt, brick by brick, at the site of Thomas More's garden in Chelsea. Viewing this resurrection of that magnificent edifice, Henry James wrote in the essay I quoted earlier: "Strange withal the whirligig of time; this great structure came down to the sound of lamentation, not to say of execration, and of the gnashing of teeth, and went up again before cold and disbelieving eyes; in spite of which history appears to have decided once more to cherish it and give it a new consecration."

Close by pointing to a few ironies in the title of my paper, "The Whirligig of Time," James' solemn tribute to Crosby Hall with its wistful tag, "the whirligig of time," echoes the final words of Feste, the clown, in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. In the final scene of that most festive of Shakespearean comedy with its dark sub-text, Feste taunts Malvolio, the puritan, by ridiculing him to his mistress Viola with these familiar lines:

*Why, 'some are born great, some achieve greatness,
and some have greatness thrown upon them.'
and thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges.*

Feste, the clown, Sir Toby Belch, Maria

and Sir Andrew Aguecheek exact their revenge on Malvolio for his puritanical censoring of their revelry, but his last line carries with it the ominous prophecy of what was to come forty years later in London. Malvolio responds with the final lines of the Play:

I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you.

And ironically, he exacted his revenge through his Puritan successors who closed the English theaters in 1640.

In summary I reflect on the whirligig of time as it has zigzagged over the past 530 years. John Crosby built his mansion in 1470. King Richard III took it over in 1483 and plotted there the murder of his two nephew princes. Thomas More lived in it for a few years in 1520 and may have written parts of his History of Richard III there. William Rastell, More's nephew, lived in it in 1557 when he published the Complete

English Works of his uncle, Thomas More. In 1908 while Crosby Hall was being moved from Bishopgate Street in London to Thomas More's garden in Chelsea, Cathedral Hall was being constructed in Chicago. And we are here tonight as members of the Chicago Literary Club in ways, however remote, connected in the whirligig of time to our forebears in the Caxton Club, the University Club, and to medieval England.

§§

The Caxton Club mourns the passing of our longtime member Robert R. Boyle. He passed away after a brief illness on May 12. A memorial service will be held May 31, 4pm, at Three Crowns Park, 2323 McDaniel, Evanston.



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The Utterly Correct Guide to Clarity and Style

Read the book for yourself and decide the correct article to go before “utterly”

This is a Book Review

Dreyer's English, An Utterly Correct Guide to Clarity and Style, by Benjamin Dreyer, Copy Chief, Random House. Published by Random House, New York, NY. 2019.

Reviewed by Wendy Cowles Husser

Hear! Hear! The approving ejaculation (no, it is not Here! Here!). As Jon Meacham says on the back cover of this wonderful and instructional book:

Farewell Strunk and White. Benjamin Dreyer's pithy, incandescently intelligent book is to contemporary writing what Geoffrey Chaucer's poetry was to medieval English: a gift that broadens and deepens the art and the science of literature by illustrating that convention should not stand in the way of creativity, so long as that creativity is expressed with clarity and with conviction.

Amen. A little grammar is **not** a dangerous thing (see ch. 6). This amusing, sometimes laugh-out-loud serious writing, is a can't put it down for those who love words correctly used.

The very first challenge from Dreyer for those who want to use words in a more effective way is to go a week without using these words: very, rather, really, quite, in fact, just so, of course, surely, and, that said. Go ahead. Try.

The book's 192 pages include a 13-page index that is finally useful if you need to find even one small word. Part I is titled, appropriately, **The Stuff in the Front**. This contains 'stuff' familiar to all editors, and focuses on tidying up prose issues, rules, and non-rules. For example, it IS, in fact, alright to split an infinitive but who knew? "To boldly go where no man has gone before." An example from the writer Raymond Chandler puts this argument to rest. He wrote a note to the editor of the *Atlantic*, saying, among other things, "when I split an infinitive, Goddammit, I split it so it will stay split."

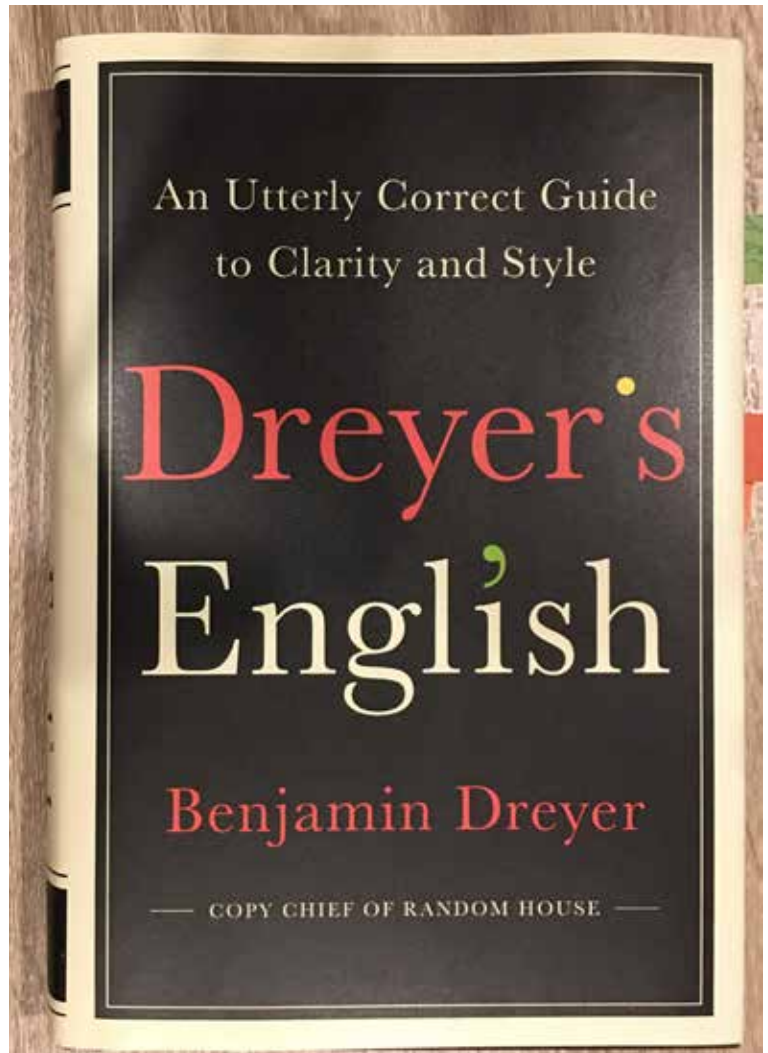
Dreyer teaches, with examples, why passive voice should be avoided, and why sentence fragments sometimes work fabulously if you are Charles Dickens. Another hot topic (with which I disagree) focuses on the use of who or that. A who is always a person, to me, and a desk is always a that. Not so for Dreyer. We tend to write using what we were taught without thinking about possibilities.

We move into punctuation issues, think BA, MA, PhD, FBI, UNESCO, all with no punctuation. But my favorite argument is about use of the what I call the serial comma. Dreyer calls it the series comma because 'serial' makes him think of a killer. "Only godless savages eschew the series comma," and he uses an unforgettable example. "Highlights of his global tour included encounters with Nelson Mandela, an 800-year old demigod and a dildo collection."

Just think how that series comma changes meanings. This gnarly issue of comma use has many fans, and many who are still arguing about it.

Once, giving a lecture on editing at a national meeting (of surgeons who knew that whatever I said, of course, [there it is, oh oh] they knew more), I showed a slide about how effective the comma is. "The Father visited his son at school once. The Father visited his son at school, once." Trust me, the little comma is your friend. But for a final remark about the little comma, I recently saw a very au courant advertisement for a T-shirt for the 21st century. It said: 'Practice safe text, use commas.'

And by the way, Dreyer has this to say in passing about the comma's relative, the semicolon is: do not use semicolons. "They are transvestite hermaphrodites representing absolutely nothing. All they do is show that you've been to college."



Dreyer's Part I is called, as noted, the stuff in the front, and the Part II is of course parallel, **The Stuff in the Back**. That about sums it up. How charming, and descriptive, and perfect. Chapter 3 deals with numbers, rules, foreign affairs, those foreign words that have crept into English but remain as they were spelled and used in their original language. Words for example, like menage a trois, chutzpah, hausfrau, mea culpa, non sequitur, and, schadenfreude, among others. Included is a long discussion about changes in spellings with those thorny issues from emigrated English words. Colour, travelled, grey or gray. Dreyer also attends to the Brit use of periods or commas outside closing quotation marks. His book misses not a thing that any editor could need.

Chapter 7 is called The Realities of Fiction, and it concludes Part I by examining the actual work of an editor does.

An attentive copy editor should become attuned to and immersed in a writer's voice to the point where the copy editor has so thoroughly absorbed the writer's intentions that the process turns into a sort of conversation-on-the-page.

And in a terrific segment about good storytelling, Dreyer has this to say:

If your attempts to distinguish between unnamed characters of no particular importance lead to describing what 'the first woman' then said to 'the second woman,'

you might want to step back and give these women, if not names, at least distinct physical characteristics that can be expressed in one or two words. The redhead. The other woman. Something.

[Remember what you learned about The Redhead? See how she pops up as a distinguishing feature?]

This final chapter in Part I goes over many style issues and long discussions of specific points. Long to go into but you will be the better for reading through it.

Part II begins with Chapter 8, "Notes on, Amid a List of, Frequently and/or Easily Misspelled Words" and begins with those frequently misspelled words. Dear reader, I



confess that I was brought up short here, and until this challenge, I believed that I could spell any word. Period. Examples of these misspelled words are, ad nauseum is correct as ad nauseam, consensus is right, it is not consensus. Then there is Battalion, not Batallion, and diphtheria NOT diptheria (surprising, eh?) and how many of you spell fuchsia as fuschia? And what about raspberry NOT rasberry. To keep from going on to some 60 or more amazing corrections, what about the word ecstasy, or what I might have written as ecstacy. And, dear reader, it is not damnit, goddammit, damn it all to hell, and I wish people would knock it off already (direct from Dreyer's own words). Dreyer goes through

editing. He is a graduate of Northwestern University, Chicago, and currently is VP, Executive managing editor, and copy Chief of Random House. This review could go on highlighting every page from this illuminating and funny book, but perhaps, dear reader you might need a rest. I leave you with a quotation from, of all people, Lyle Lovett. Well, he actually graduated from Texas A & M University with a BA in both German and Journalism in 1980. Again, who knew? Believe Lovett and read for pure enjoyment.

Dreyer's English is essential to anyone who cares about language. It's as smart and funny as Dreyer himself. He makes you smile and makes you smarter at the same time.

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Caxton Club COUNCIL NOTES

Leora Siegel, Secretary

These candidates were presented by Susan Hanes and Jackie Vossler, co-chairs of the Membership Committee, and approved for membership at the May Council meeting:

James R. Akerman [Resident] (Maps, Guidebooks, and Travel Ephemera). Jim received his PhD in Geography from Penn State in 1991. He has worked at the Newberry Library since 1985, where he has been Director of the Smith Center for the History of Cartography since 1996 and Curator of Maps since 2011. He was nominated by Bob Karrow and seconded by Roger Baskes.

Erika Dowell [Non-Resident] (20th century history of the DIY movement and

modern firsts). Her spouse is James Morrison, and they reside in Bloomington, Indiana.

After completing her MLS, Erika has held a variety of positions at the Lilly Library at Indiana University. Currently, she is Associate Director and Curator of Modern Books and Manuscripts. She is former president of the Indiana University Bloomington Faculty Council and is past chair of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries. As an adjunct instructor in the Department of Information & Library Science, School of Informatics & Computing, she teaches a course on the administration of manuscript collections. She was nominated by Joel Silver and seconded by Elizabeth Frangel.

Christopher Hammer [Non-Resident] Christopher grew up outside Detroit and attended the University of Notre Dame, majoring in history and political science. He attended graduate school at the University of Virginia, where he earned an MA in history and a law degree. After graduating, he returned to Michigan, where he served for eight years as a Senior Law Clerk on the Michigan Supreme Court. He moved to New York City in 2016 and currently works in City government as an ethics attorney. Apart from reading and collecting books, he enjoys running marathons, traveling, and photography. Nominated by Jackie Vossler and seconded by Richard Renner.

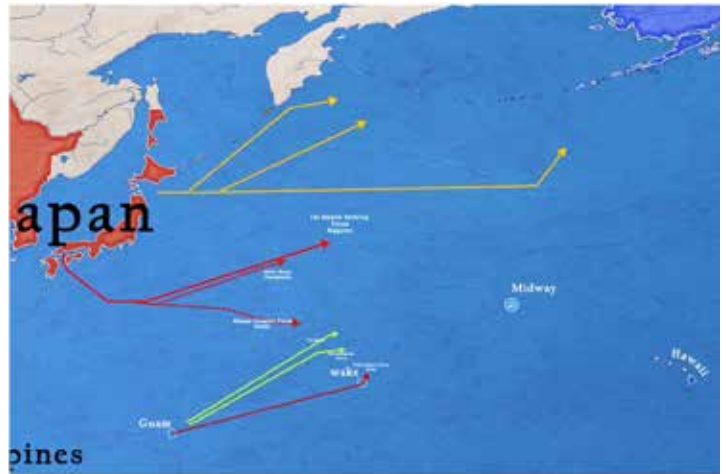
See COUNCIL NOTES, page 12

Book- and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

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

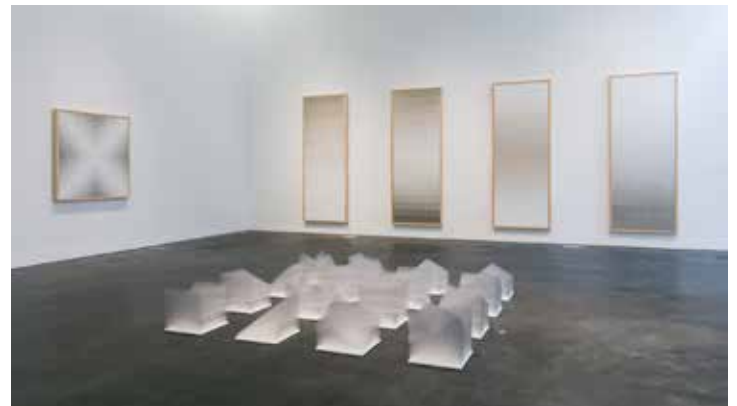
- American Writers Museum**, 180 N. Michigan Avenue, second floor, Chicago, 312-374-8790: **“Tools of the Trade”** (typewriters, inkwells, braille writers, etc. as used by Cisneros, Brooks, Bradbury, and others), opening during June.
- Art Institute of Chicago**, 111 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-443-3600: **“Medu Art Ensemble: The People Shall Govern”** (art collective advocating for social justice and pan-African solidarity), Gallery 1-4, through September 2. **“Gregg Bordowitz: I Wanna Be Well”** (video, art made for television, published poems, and site-specific installations from the AIDS crisis forward), galleries 182-84 and 186, through July 14.
- Chicago Botanic Garden, Lenhardt Library**, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-8202: **“Spice Rack”** (illustrations of plants known for their spices), through June 2.
- Chicago Cultural Center**, 78 E. Washington Street, Chicago, 312-744-6630: **“Goat Island Archive”** (memorabilia from the group’s 23 years of productions), Exhibition Hall, 4th floor north.
- Chicago History Museum**, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago, 312-266-2077: **“Amplified Chicago Blues”** (photography by Raeburn Flerlage captures streets, clubs, homes, and studios), through August 10.
- Intuit Museum of Outsider Art**, 756 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, 312-243-9088: **“Susan Te Kahurangi King: 1958-2018”** (a survey of the living, but mute, New Zealand-based artist’s work), through August 4.
- Newberry Library**, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, 312-943-9090: **“The Legacy of Chicago Dance”** (surveying the city’s vibrant dance community) through July 6.
- Northwestern University Transportation Library**, 1970 Campus Drive, fifth floor, Evanston, 847-491-7658: **“African Aviation in the 1970s,”** ongoing. E-mail transportationlibrary@northwestern.edu to schedule an appointment.
- Pritzker Military Museum and Library**, 104 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-374-9333: **“D-Day + 75”** (a flashback to June 1944, when the world waited with anticipation to learn the outcome of the invasion of France), opens June 6.
- Smart Museum of Art**, 5550 S. Greenwood Avenue, Chicago, 773-702-0200: **“Tara Donovan: Fieldwork”** (transforming mundane materials into elaborate, mid-bending objects), opens June 14.
- Spudnik Press Cooperative**, 1821 W. Hubbard Street, suite 302, Chicago, 312-563-0302: **“Noah Breuer: CB&S Werkstätte”** (prints and wall hangings from Carl Breuer and Sons), through July 27.
- University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library**, Special Collections Research Center Exhibition Gallery, 1100 E. 57th Street, second floor, Chicago, 773-702-8705: **“Independent Nations Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania”** (exhibit in conjunction with a Court Theatre production), through June 27.

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Pritzker Military Museum/D-Day + 75
VIDEO PRESENTATION STILL

Smart Museum/Tara Donovan
INSTALLATION VIEW, FIELDWORK, MCA DENVER, 2018. COURTESY THE ARTIST AND PACE GALLERY.



University of Chicago/Independent Nations

Caxtonians Collect: Robert Wedgeworth

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

The first thing you notice about Robert Wedgeworth is that he is black. We have so few black members that it makes him a rare bird. Then you learn that he is a former executive director of the American Library Association, and that he was also dean of the library school at Columbia and head librarian at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. But the thing you will probably not learn is that he got his undergraduate degree at Wabash College in Indiana on an academic scholarship where he also excelled as a basketball player. It turns out that he picked up his relaxed nature, his ability to suss out a situation, and his drive to get things accomplished from sports.

I asked him if athletics “builds character.” He had obviously thought about the question, because he replied immediately, “No, it reveals character. It puts you in positions you haven’t experienced which force you to think on your feet and develop confidence that you can make decisions and lead. And sports is also a wonderful form of bonding.”

He remembers always being happy in libraries as a child in Kansas City, Missouri. He had done a few odd jobs at one there, shelving books and the like. He was supposed to go to college at age 15 to Fisk in Nashville (an HBCU member), but his parents thought he was too young. As result of this opportunity he became a top college prospect both as a student and an all-state basketball player. He caught the eye of Wabash College, but when his parents died during his senior year he could not afford it. Fortunately, the foundation that had offered him the place at Fisk found additional money to fully fund his Wabash education.

It was the college librarian at Wabash who recruited him into librarianship as a career. “He personally took me to visit the library schools at the University of Illinois and Indiana University. I picked the University of Illinois.” He distinguished himself there sufficiently to be invited to participate in what turned out to be a life-changing project. The country was gearing up for the Seattle World’s

Fair of 1962. The American Library Association was planning a “Library 21” exhibit about the library of the future. He became a part of the pioneering group that was visualizing a library of the future with features provided by electronic computing.

Being an expert on something almost nobody in the world had thought about--the application of digital electronics to the func-



tions traditionally offered by libraries--made him something of a hot commodity. He was hired by Brown University as Assistant Chief Acquisitions Librarian in July 1966, with a special assignment to introduce library automation to the Brown libraries. The next step was the Graduate School of Library Service at Rutgers in New Jersey, who hired him in 1969 to do advanced studies in librarianship and teach in the graduate program.

His stellar reputation led to his being hired to bring the then-suffering American Library Association (ALA) back to the land of living associations. In addition to poor morale and drifting management, ALA had two major problems draining its bank account. One was a commitment to a new headquarters building in Chicago which appeared likely to fall apart without any building being built. The other was a bloated staff, with more people than were required. He applied himself with fervor to both problems, achieving noteworthy

success. A different developer brought the new headquarters into reality, providing ALA with additional space and rental income. And constant questioning about who did what, and why, led gradually to more efficient use of staff.

With things improving, he looked for other projects. One was National Library Week, which was foundering in the care of an independent committee answering to both the ALA and the American Book Publishers. Wedgeworth offered to bring it under the ALA and managed to revitalize it. In this he worked with Caxtonian Peggy Barber, interviewed in the Caxtonian of May, 2017.

Another major ALA project on which his early experience with the preparations for the Seattle World’s Fair turned out to be of use was its involvement with the negotiations over the Copyright Act of 1976, which many feel was a “fair compromise” between the interests of publishers and authors. He explains: “One of the major sticking points was photocopying, in which professors or teachers would copy a section of an article or book for a class to read. Schools and teachers couldn’t contemplate buying the whole work in order to use only a part for everyone in a class--or

forcing every library user to do the same--but that is what the publishers wanted. Fortunately the library was able to persuade the Congress of the real situation, paving the way for a compromise.”

Believing that 12 years was long enough at the ALA, he stopped in 1985. But he didn’t retire: he became dean of the library school at Columbia University for seven years, and then went back to the home of his library degree, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, to serve as University Librarian as well holding two professorships. However, he did continue work on the Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services, published by the ALA, producing a third edition of this influential work in 1993.

In his “retirement” since, he has devoted himself to work on literacy and become a long-term, active board member at the Newberry.

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Bookmarks...

Luncheon: Friday, June 7, Union League Club
Dave Revsine on *The Opening Kickoff*

The football clash was beyond sold out and scalpers were raising their prices by the minute. An opportunist had bought the rights to a bluff overlooking the field and was selling standing room on the muddy surface. Fans were streaming into the stadium and betting lavishly on the outcome. This was collegiate powerhouse football. The year was 1893. The schools were Yale and Princeton.

The Regenstein Library's site used to be home to Stagg Field, which hosted U of Chicago football elevens that laid claim to two national titles. Harvard and Yale players ranked in All-America honors. Penn was a power. All at a cost. There were players with only the vaguest notion of where the classrooms were, coaches willing to twist the rules, win-at-all-cost boosters, and universities gone football mad — all egged on by cigar chomping reporters. Dave Revsine, author of *The Opening Kickoff*, will tell the fascinating story of college football's early days. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Northwestern, Revsine serves as the lead studio host for the Big Ten Network. He'll spin a lively tale that is sure to delight — whether you're an armchair quarterback or think a forward pass is a cheeky line from some guy in a bookstore.

June 7 Luncheon: Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Boulevard. Buffet opens at 11:30 am; program 12:30-1:30. Luncheon is \$35. Program free but please let us know you're coming. Reservations or cancellations for lunch by noon Wednesday the week of the luncheon. Reserve at caxtonclub.org, call 312-255-3710, or e-mail caxtonclub@newberry.org.

Dinner: Wednesday, June 19, Union League Club
Bruce Kennett on "W. A. Dwiggins: A Life in Design"

Join us for book designer and photographer Bruce Kennett's lush-ly-illustrated presentation on W.A. Dwiggins (1880-1956), educated in Chicago at Frank Holme's School of Illustration. His wide-ranging talent, from designing legendary typefaces to puppetry, required the then-new term "graphic designer" to define him. But beyond the talent, Bruce will share his favorite aspect of the man: Dwiggins' whimsy and wit. "WAD" believed that humor and satire were far more effective ways to bring about change than lecturing and finger-wagging. Bruce has plentiful examples of WAD's output in this vein. June 19th is Dwiggins' birthday, and Bruce promises a rollicking good time celebrating a man who just plain loved to have fun. Copies of Bruce's book *W.A. Dwiggins: A Life in Design* (Letterform Archive, 2017) will be available for sale and signing for \$80.

This will conclude the Caxton Club 2018-2019 year and be the last meeting before our summer break.

June Dinner: Union League Club, 65 West Jackson. The evening will follow this order: Social gathering 5-6 pm; program at 6 pm; dinner immediately follows. Program is free and open to the public. Beverages available for \$6-\$12. Three-course dinner: \$63.00. Reservations are required for either the program only or the dinner/program combination. They must be received no later than NOON, MONDAY, June 17. Payment will be required for dinner reservations cancelled after that time and for no-shows. To reserve go to the website at caxtonclub.org, call 312-255-3710, or e-mail caxtonclub@newberry.org.

COUNCIL NOTES, from page 9

Mary Minow [Resident]

After working at the Newberry Library while she was in college, Mary graduated from Brown University with a degree in Organizational Behavior. She received an AMLS

in Library Science from the University of Michigan and a JD from Stanford University. Mary has served as a library law consultant on issues of copyright, free speech, disability access and privacy in libraries. In 2010, she has been appointed by President Obama to

the National Museum and Library Services Board, which provides strategic direction for libraries and museums. Nominated by Michael Huckman and seconded by Eden Martin.

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