



CFP Reminder

Just a few weeks left to submit abstracts for this year's conference to be held at the University of Melbourne, 26–27 November. **Closing date for offers is Monday 29th June 2015.** The conference is entitled 'Turning the Page: Bibliographical Innovation and the Legacy of Aldus Manutius' and marks the 500th anniversary of the death of Aldus Pius Manutius Romanus, one of the three great pioneers of printing (along with Johannes Gutenberg and William Caxton). Manutius worked predominantly from Venice during his twenty-odd-year career before passing on the business to his son and grandson. He had a vision of disseminating Classical culture, much of his output being editions and translations of Greek, and some Latin, texts. He established an academy of scholars to prepare Greek MSS for printing and even learned and used Greek at home and in the print shop. A central figure in Renaissance classical culture, his academy corresponded with the circle of scholars around Erasmus and Thomas Linacre in Henry VIII's London.

Technically and aesthetically, Manutius introduced a string of innovations including typefaces like Bembo, Garamond and Palatino, regularised punctuation, and scholarly introductions, but the innovation for which he is most famous is the *italic font*. This was intended not as mode of emphasis, however, but simply as a technique of compaction. For Manutius saw the advantage of making small-format books that could be carried in an overcoat pocket, and from 1501 printed smaller octavo editions that could be made thinner if printed in italics.

Manutius's books show the rapid evolution from manuscript pages. On the one hand his pages have a neat type-bed with justified margins, and occasional flourishes such as tapering column- or page-endings which look very modern, while on the other the books are issued with arcane abbreviation conventions and with indicative blocks awaiting hand-coloured initials in the manner of an illuminated manuscript. (See examples incorporated below.) Manutius had a wonderful sense of what these days are called 'production values'.

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Anutius is just the starting point, however, for while the conference is anchored in and celebrates his pioneering achievements, it recognises that innovation and change have been hallmarks of the practice of printing, publishing and book distribution ever since, and invites offers of papers which exemplify, historicise or theorise such developments from all centuries and locations.

The keynote address will be given by founding member of the Society and former President, Professor Wallace Kirsop. An expert on French bibliography, Professor Kirsop has chosen to approach Manutius and the universe of biblioinnovation via the compiler of the first serious bibliography of the Aldine Press, Antoine-Augustin Renouard (1765 – 1853).

His talk is provisionally titled 'The Age of

Renouard’.

Enquiries and proposals of 250 words for papers of 20 to 25 minutes should be sent to Anthony Tedeschi (atedeschi@unimelb.edu.au), Curator, Rare Books, Baillieu Library, The University of Melbourne. The deadline for paper proposals is **Monday 29 June 2015**. Students undertaking higher degree research are encouraged to submit offers of ‘work in progress’ papers; some travel bursaries will be available.

Further conference details will be made available progressively on the BSANZ Inc. website: <http://www.bsanz.org/>

Even if you think you have no great interest in Italian Renaissance culture you will probably find fascinating the judgment of the Venetian Doge on Aldus’s application for what we would now call a patent on the italic font he commissioned. An English translation can be found here:

<http://italianrenaissanceresources.com/units/unit-4/sub-page-03/privilege-is-granted-to-aldus-manutius-by-the-venetian-government-for-the-production-of-his-new-italic-typeface/>

The Melbourne Rare Book Fair

Members may remember that the Society became a partner in the Melbourne Rare Book Fair this year and will be hosting a lecture on the first weekend. This will be given by former BSANZ President, John Arnold, with the title ‘Book Collecting in the Internet Age: Tips, Tricks and Traps.’ The talk will be in the Leigh Scott Room at the Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne on Sunday 19 July 2.00-3.00pm. We hope John gets a good roll-up including some supportive Society members. The description of the talk is:

John Arnold has been involved in the second-hand book trade as a dealer and collector for over forty years. In this talk he will use this vast experience to shed light on the world of book collecting, covering topics such as: what is a book collector, collecting terminology, the physical make-up of books, how and where to find and buy books, and understanding seller descriptions.

The Rare Book Fair has grown to be an exciting and important annual event with a very diverse range of institutions and societies playing a role. The State Library, the State Archives, the Victoria Museum, and the State Gallery (aka the confused and delusive National Gallery of Victoria) are each hosting at least one event, but so are the universities, the Army, and a motley of entities whose aims and functions may lie quite elsewhere, but who

depend upon, produce, or come into contact with books in some way. The list includes The Genealogical Society of Victoria, the Law Library of Victoria, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, The Johnson Society of Australia, the Melbourne Cricket Club Library, the Melbourne Athenaeum Library, the Melbourne Library Service, the C. J. La Trobe Society, and the Australian Institute of Art History.

There’s even an Antique Books Roadshow enabling Melbourne burghers to present treasures from their attics for comment and valuation by antique bookdealers. So work on your incredulous-but-delighted look, and your oh-no-it’s-a-family-heirloom-I-would-never – dream-of-selling-it routine in case they televise the session.

John Arnold is not the only BSANZ member on the podium during the Week. Our President, Donald Kerr is giving a talk for the State Library, while longstanding member, Richard Overell, discusses John Emmerson’s recent benefaction to the State Library, and then for the Athenaeum Library, nineteenth- and twentieth-century paperbacks. The timetable for those speakers is:

Sun 19 July 2-3pm, John Arnold, ‘Book collecting in the Internet age: Tips, tricks and traps’, Leigh Scott Room, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne, Grattan Street, Clayton. Sponsored by the BSANZ.

Mon 20 July 6-7pm, Donald Kerr, 'Collectors, that happy band of patriots, Grey, Hocken and Reed' (The 2015 Foxcroft Lecture), Village Roadshow Theatre, State Library Victoria, 28 Swanston Street, Melbourne.

Tue 21 July 7-8pm, Richard Overell 'Collecting pamphlets, yellow backs, dime novels and Penguins', Melbourne Athenaeum Library, Level 1, 188 Collins Street, Melbourne.

Thurs July 23 July 11am-11.45am, Richard Overell, Tour of the John Emmerson Collection, McArthur Gallery, State Library Victoria, 28 Swanston Street, Melbourne. (Meet in the Library foyer.)

The official timetable for the whole Week can be found at <http://www.rarebookweek.com/> and is well worth a browse even if you have no chance of getting to Melbourne for the event.

Note: All talks etc. at the Rare Book Week are free, but many require advance booking as the venues have limited capacity. You can book directly from the Rare Book Week website.

Recent Publications by Members

The Society congratulates members on recent publications:

Dennis Bryans, *A Survey of Australian Typefounders' Specimens*. Golden Point Press, 2014. 96pp. A\$50 + postage. Illustrated in colour and black and white. Hard cover. [ISBN 9780994184207]
(Available from the Publisher, Golden Point Press, 39B Bond Avenue, Blackburn South, Vic. 3130 or Post Office Box 2168 Blackburn South, Vic. 3130.)

The skills and workmanship exhibited by Australia's pioneer typefounders in these specimens present a vital source of information for future print historians, and offer insights into our printing past for the general reader. Background information and additional specimens from other collections is included to give context to the newly discovered items.

The book contains, biographical details of the founders, as well as several portraits: Charles George Roeszler (undated), H. J. Thitchener (c1880), H. A. Thitchener (1915), and Frederick Wimble and his staff photographed in 1918.

A unique feature of Australian-made fonts was type suitable for recording the brands required by the governments of the colonies of New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia by which horses, cattle and sheep could be identified. These original and often curious designs are notable for their raw utility.

Donald Kerr, *Hocken: Prince of Collectors*, University of Otago Press, 2015. 424pp + 40 pp photos. NZ\$60. Hard cover. [ISBN 9781877578663]

Dr Thomas Morland Hocken (1836–1910) arrived in Dunedin in 1862, aged 26. Throughout his busy life as a medical practitioner he amassed books, manuscripts, sketches, maps and photographs of early New Zealand. Much of his initial collecting focused on the early discovery narratives of James Cook; along with the writings of Reverend Samuel Marsden and his contemporaries; Edward Gibbon Wakefield and the New Zealand Company; and Māori, especially in the south. He gifted his collection to the University of Otago in 1910.

Hocken was a contemporary of New Zealand's other two notable early book collectors, Sir George Grey and Alexander Turnbull. In this magnificent piece of research, Donald Kerr examines Hocken's collecting activities and his vital contribution to preserving the history of New Zealand's early post-contact period.

Lucy Sussex, *Blockbuster!: Fergus Hume and The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*. Text Publishing, 2015. 336pp. A\$32.99. Paper. Illustrated. [ISBN 9781922147943]
(In what is probably a first for the Society, Lucy's book is also available in ebook format.)

ISBN: 9781922148940)

Fergus Hume was an aspiring playwright when he moved from Dunedin to Melbourne in 1885. He wrote *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* with the humble hope of bringing his name to the attention of theatre managers. The book sold out its first run almost instantly and it became a runaway word-of-mouth phenomenon—but its author sold the copyright for a mere fifty pounds, missing out on a potential fortune.

The *Hansom Cab* is a mystery, not only in literary genre, but as to the publishing story behind it. How could a small, ‘self-published’ book from the edge of the British Empire sell out its colonial editions—allegedly, of 5,000 and 10,000 copies, unprecedented for the Austral market at that time? Furthermore, it then became an international success, selling 500,000 copies in England, and helping to create the market for Sherlock Holmes. Publishing records are scant, but it is possible to reconstruct the *Hansom Cab*’s journey to print, and its rejection by or support from the major colonial bookmen of the time: George Robertson, and Cole of the Book Arcade. Innovation, daring and some dubious dealings saw the *Hansom Cab* financed, printed and publicised. Frederick Trischler, Hume’s publisher, has been obscured, but he emerges as an entrepreneur and promoter ahead of his time. The *Hansom Cab*’s success affected the emerging crime genre, Australian writing, and colonial publishing. Not least, it had a direct connection with the Melbourne Bank Crash of the 1890s.

Reliability and Libraries

The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported last weekend that this year’s Sydney Writers’ Festival had been a record success. Attendances were up, book sales established new records, and one author spent several hours [sic!] signing copies of his books after a panel session. For all the reports of a national slide towards attention deficiency disorder, reading books – often substantial books – seems extraordinarily resilient.

And yet we have to set against such optimistic evidence the apparent ambivalence towards books of some of the institutions and people whom one would expect to be their fiercest defenders. Our spies tell us that one university library in the ANZ region is trialling a new procedure for books requested through Document Delivery (née Inter-Library Loans). In earlier times, an ILL request for a new book by an academic would be taken as an indication that the library should hold the title, so a copy would be obtained, rush catalogued, and immediately loaned to the requester. When it was returned it would be added to the collection. Under the procedure now being trialled, the first check performed is to see whether an electronic edition of the book is available. If not, the printed version is acquired by the library, but if it costs less than \$100, instead of being catalogued it is simply given to the requester on a do-not-return basis. The library has semi-convinced itself that this is preferable to paying for the cataloguing and storage of the book. The Baldrick in us can’t help immediately formulating a cunning plan for augmenting our personal libraries, but at the same time one has to feel rather glum about the implications of this trial.

However efficient this practice may seem from the point of view of immediate service, it is further evidence of a short-term, instrumentalist concept of the library’s role, and casts the library as entirely reactive to the clientele of the moment. More and more it seems the national and state libraries are the last places standing with a brief of collecting material to build a serious long-term resource.

Once upon a time one described a university collection that held all or most of the material within its collecting guidelines as ‘reliable’. Nowadays a ‘reliable’ university library is more likely to mean one that has a 24hr reading room with bean bags and notably fast internet access.

BSANZ conference abstracts due 29 June

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