**BUILDING AN ANTIQUARIAN AND VINTAGE SAILING LIBRARY**

Climbing, caving and sub aqua diving predominated in my salad days but five years of my childhood in Malta re-asserted their influence and I returned to sailing, owning the Centaur, Blue Spindrift, for the last 28 years. I am not a librarian, merely a leisure sailor who likes books.

Around 40 years ago I bought a copy of *The Log of the Blue Dragon II* by C.C. Lynam. Cruising in the wake of the Blue Dragon the rest of his trilogy followed and with it interest in other pioneers. For Lynam one needed to look no further than his biography, *The Skipper*, written by his brother A.E. Lynam but his books add details.

My copy of *To Norway and the North Cape* has Lynam's Dragon School presentation bookplate inscribed by him. I did a double take on seeing the signature Gordon S. Shepard in my copy of *The Log of The Blue Dragon 1892-1904,* a gift from Lynam. Sadly, not the Gordon Shephard (with an h) of the Howth and Kilcoole gun-running.

I have loved Maurice Griffiths' writing. In *The Magic of the Swatchways* he referred to his inspiration, a little book entitled *Swin, Swale and Swatchway* by Henry Lewis Jones. Who was Jones? Researching him was a fascinating quest. Finding a copy in the National Library of Scotland, I wrote a foreword with pictures of the Eclipse camera Jones used and David Goodchild of The Shellback's Library produced a reprint. I recently acquired an original 1892 copy.

Later, book buying became more systematic using the two-volume bibliography *Adventurers Afloat*, Ernest W. Toy. It lists sailing's earliest writings through 1986. It gives a brief résumé of each title, prompting what to look for. The Internet provides the means of finding it. If you find something not listed in Toy you know it is an uncommon title of potential interest. Elizabeth Strong of McNaughtan's bookshop, Edinburgh put me on to the meta search engine ADDALL. There are various others such as Bookfinder and Euro-Book but ADDALL is the one I prefer.

Not having time to catalogue my books, a pencil annotation in Toy keeps track of what I have. Such is the affinity; too often I have bought a title I already own.

The pleasure of browsing second-hand and antiquarian bookshops will return post Covid-19. Until then, in Scotland we have McLaren Books, Helensburgh, a nautical specialist with an excellent website to browse. The proprietor, George Newlands, was coxswain of the lifeboat and knows his stuff. His stock has filled in some of my gaps. A visit to the shop, followed by seafood chowder in Café 19 on the sea front is a treat.

In the south, Fisher Nautical is a super firm to deal with. Their books arrive beautifully packaged in delightfully old world parcels of strong brown paper, tied with string with the shop's printed label. You can browse their stock on ABEBOOKS.

General book dealers may have less of interest but a desirable title can be cheaper than from a specialist. My copy of *Our Seamen, An Appeal* by Samuel Plimsoll MP, is a case in point. Another is *Prince Charlie's Pilot* by Evan MacLeod Barron, a ripping yarn so detailed it gives the names of the Prince's oarsmen. Also for the cruiser in Scottish waters the two volumes of Wilson's Voyage Around Scotland and Archibald Young's Summer Sailings can still to be found. Second-hand books have been hugely under valued. Even in the days of the Internet few dealers have the time to research what they sell. The focus has to be on acquiring stock and selling.

Charity shops should not be passed by without a look. You never know what will turn up. Standing outside one waiting for my wife I thought I might as well go in. I was rewarded with a copy of *The Sea Devil's Fo'c'sle* by Lowell Thomas signed by the Sea Devil, Felix Count Luckner, March 1930, the amazing sailor of WWI. It had been retailed by The Bookshelf Inc. in Cleveland, Ohio so was probably signed by von Luckner on one of his USA lecture tours.

Stockbridge, Edinburgh has two charity bookshops, OXFAM Books and Shelter. Both have been fruitful sources. I donate unwanted books to OXFAM gift aided, a great way of turning over stock and books going out of the house are good for marital harmony. Some duplicates I keep for the boat.

I buy books to read and will buy a book in any condition if the price is right. This has meant a return to bookbinding, started by my primary school teacher Mr. Thomas, Deputy Headmaster of St Andrew's Army Primary School in Malta in 1961.

My work is usually re-stitching loose gathers and adding a leather spine. A book can be given a new lease of life and made to presentable on the bookshelf. Fine red calf leather came from the cushion of an Egyptian camel stool and brown calf from a Moroccan leather grip. Removing the fabric backing yielded leather of just the right thickness. Inexpensive recyclable materials abound. For the writers of The Lindisfarne Gospels there were no bookbinders suppliers.

In Falkirk, Stirlingshire we have Riley, Dunn and Wilson, one of the UK's foremost bookbinders and paper conservators. Sadly the cost of professional restoration makes it uneconomic for most private owners.

With careful work and the conservator's mantra of 'anything you do should be reversible' one is unlikely to do much harm. There is heaps of published guidance. Water-soluble glue like methylcellulose gel (wall paper paste) can be dampened to loosen it. Learning a few professional touches an amateur job can look pleasing and save a book that would otherwise be lost. Professionals do a little at a time and are patient, waiting for glue to dry before continuing. You see this in bookbinder's shops, part finished jobs lying all over the place. Polythene covered plywood boards and large G clamps suffice for a book press, padded Bulldog clips are handy too.

Kindle or not, increasingly one needs to own books. Several of mine have the bookplate of the Royal Forth Yacht Club library, long since disbursed. The CA and some of the London clubs still have libraries but you have to be a member. The cost of travelling any distance to a national library usually makes purchase of a book preferable to train tickets. Besides, they are a delight. Pick up a copy of Claude Kempson's *The Greenfinch Cruise* or *The Misadventures of a Hack Cruiser* and I'm sure you will agree. To handle old books is to time travel. Their style helped develop my career and make sailing a year round interest.

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