

Books and Autographs and Ever the Twain Shall Meet: Two Reviews

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AHEARN, Allen, and AHEARN, Patricia. *Collected Books: The Guide to Identification and Values—4th Edition.* Comus, MD: Quill & Brush Press, 2011. Small 4to. Clothbound, dust jacket. xiv, 817pp. \$75.00.

KELLS, Stuart. *Rare: A life among antiquarian books.* Foreword by Geoffrey Blainey. Edgecliff, Australia: Folio, 2011. Small 4to. Hardbound. 311pp. Illustrations. \$65.00.

There's no scarier demonstration of just how dangerous a *little* knowledge can be than a price guide in the hands of an inexperienced collector. At the same time, what more logical place for a budding bibliophile to begin than with a price guide? This quandary could be addressed if only the president named a Book Czar who legislated that every price guide bear a "*Best if used by*" date (one day after date of publication, some say) and a "*Use with extreme caution and strictly under adult supervision*" label.

Allen and Pat Ahearns' *Collected Books* was first published in 1991, a worthy successor to Van Allen Bradley's *Handbook of Values*, an Old School price guide that even at that time was

COLLECTED BOOKS

THE GUIDE TO IDENTIFICATION AND VALUES
FOURTH EDITION

ALLEN and PATRICIA AHEARN



An introduction to and advice on book collecting with a glossary of terms and tips on how to identify first editions and estimated values for 20,000 collectible books published in English (including translations) over the last three centuries—about half are literary titles in the broadest sense (novels, poetry, plays, mysteries, science fiction, and children's books); and half are non-fiction (Americana, travel and exploration, finance, cookbooks, color plate, medicine, science, photography, Mormonism, sports, *et al*)

woefully outdated. A second edition came out in 1998, a third in 2002 and now, after umpteen delays, a long-awaited fourth edition. Those ten intervening years saw more dramatic upheaval in the publishing and book collecting fields than any decade since Gutenberg first pressed moveable type onto paper—a whole other topic too large to be addressed here.

As I've droned on many times in this column over the years, books and autographs are interchangeable commodities to

many of us—most books throughout history have begun as handwritten manuscripts, after all. It's all about words on paper. Most autograph collectors are rather bookish and most book collectors are rather autographish, and any collector of one who doesn't lapse over into the other is really missing out.

Which is where Ahearns' *Collected Books* steps in. Often autograph collectors enter the murky waters of book collecting, not by diving headfirst into the icy depths, but by dipping their toe in first and acquiring signed books. It's a natural first step. Since signed limited editions are very much a part of *Collected Books*, this reference work will hold great appeal with autograph collectors of a bookish bent or wanting to branch out into books.

But first a word about price guides. "Is there a book that'll tell me how much my books are worth?" is a common question that makes booksellers wince and grit their teeth. We blanch, I think, because it shows the public's perception that books are simple, straightforward, finite things. The reality is that, the longer one immerses oneself in them, the more one realizes books are a world without end, bottomless in their variations and their quantity. Any book may exist in different *editions* by different publishers, with different printings within an edition, sometimes with variant bindings and jacket states and other "points" on top of that. And largely defining value, too, is *condition*, which is to books what location-location-location is to real estate. Of course supply and demand have to be factored in as well. Even if all these variables oversimplified above were surmountable, the sheer volume of titles in existence would require a price guide of unfathomable size, weight and price.

So if the notion of a price guide to books is absurd, what of Ahearns' *Collected Books*? Well, there are specialized book price guides that can prove useful—if judiciously used. There are guides to, say, Civil War books, to automotive books, to cookbooks, to other popular categories. The circa 20,000 titles covered by the Ahearns represent "high spots" in most of the major collected categories. To cite the jacket's front cover, this guide covers "collectible books published in English... over the last three centuries—about half are literary titles in the broadest sense (novels, poetry, plays, mysteries, science fiction, and children's books); and half are non-fiction (Americana, travel and exploration, finance, cookbooks, color plate, medicine, science,

photography, Mormonism, sports, et al).” Within the two inches of this tome the Ahearns have accomplished a remarkable survey of desirable books. Savvy indeed is the autograph collector who, cautiously and judiciously, studies and learns from it.

Introductory material usually gets ignored in price guides, which is largely why they’re the most misused books around. This is where the authors explain their methodology and, most importantly, the rationale for the pricing structure. The Ahearns “take” on the current market and the effect of the internet is, as expected, informative—even if you don’t agree with it. “Our sense is that the internet may not continue to be as useful a price guide as it has been because comparable copies of collectible books may not be for sale so readily in future years,” they contend:

Already, we find... that where there were 50 copies online a year ago, with probably 10 of these being in collectible condition, now there may be only 10 copies and none in collectible condition. So, a search online for comparable or similar, copies to one in-hand may not prove to be as fruitful as in the past. And, as condition is so important a factor in determining price, with a fine copy in-hand does it really help to know there are 5 low-priced copies in poor condition online? Not really.

Makes sense. As the internet has affected the sale of enormous quantities of more common condition copies, removing them from the market, remaining copies have a lot less company online—which naturally makes for that many fewer prices. This applies far more to the scarcer titles which are the subject of *Collected Books* than to lower-end titles, where copies of most titles are abundant and prices have been driven ever downward.

The Ahearns may strike some as overly optimistic, especially when faced with our current glum economy. “In general, our sense is that the non-fiction did better than the fiction over the last decade or so. Much of the Americana, particularly the western Americana, showed strong increases, as did books on travel and exploration, economics and finance. Children’s books... did very well, although [in our guide] there aren’t a great number of them. Books on books have held their prices which is normal, as they haven’t shown much growth in prices over the

years. In literature, prices for many of the literary authors from the last 20 or 30 years went down in value....” Every dealer or collector may take issue with one statement or the other—but keep in mind that even price guide authors can inject their *opinion* at every turn. Just because something is said in print doesn’t mean it’s so.

As much as *Collected Books* is a gold mine of condensed bibliographical information, basic publishing data about a sea of desirable titles, let’s face it: The vast majority of its readership purchase it for one reason—the prices. “The estimates of the prices,” note the Ahearns, “are based on our experience buying and selling books as well as the interpretation of auction prices and other dealers’ catalog prices.” They go on to defend this at length and to explain how prices may be arrived at for titles that have very few and very old price records on which to rely. “You list a price based on an extension from the last price you can find, perhaps ten years old, tempered by the prices that you know a few inferior copies have brought on the market in recent years. This may or may not be a reasonable estimate, but the odds are that it will be low, particularly if there is a pent-up demand for the book.” You’ve got to respect their well-considered approach, even if you may disagree with specific prices for particular items.

Best advice is to consider the Ahearn suggested value, then use that information accordingly. “A number of people have told us that they always use our guides [prices],” note the authors—“some use half our values; some use three-quarters of them; some double our prices; and some believe that our prices are for very good copies and that prices for fine copies would be double and mint copies would be triple.” Whether these “people” are dealers or collectors would be intriguing to know. I can say that of the dozens of dealers I’ve discussed the different editions of this book with over the years, the overwhelming *general consensus* is that the Ahearn prices are the absolute ideal price obtained for the choicest copy—that they may represent a lofty goal to strive for, but most dealers nudge prices down from that lofty ideal. Most don’t impose some fixed percentage, but judge on a case-by-case basis. One Ahearn anecdote on this topic I find particularly apropos:

A local bookstore owner who buys our guides told us he got a copy

of a certain book, and if it hadn't been for our guides, he would have priced it \$10. As it was, he found the book listed in our guide for \$500 and priced it at \$150. We bought it.

A lot to be learned from that little tale. What I'd most like to know is, what did the Ahearns price it at?

Loads of interesting and useful advice is crammed into these opening 54 pages, especially for the novice. Definitions of common terms, advice on first edition identification, a harangue about condition (can't stress this often enough!), remarks about signed books and limited editions, proof copies, sections on "Sources for Books," how to care for your books and much more. And don't neglect the equally useful appendices. Read it, study it, think about it—then repeat. Understanding these concepts inside and out will serve you better over the years than any number of hours reviewing the prices. Not that understanding prices isn't important—of course it is—but a collector who cares for nothing but "getting a deal" personifies Oscar Wilde's line about the man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. Collecting books isn't about knowing how much everything's worth; it's about the joy of learning and studying and appreciating the importance of significant books.

On to the 667 pages of fine print that constitute the bulk of *Collected Books*. Perusing these pages at random reminds you that no matter what you collect (or want to collect), no matter how arcane, you will most likely find books in that field in this guide. Into ancient papermaking techniques? There's Victor W. Von Hagen's *The Aztec and Maya Papermakers* ("One of 220 signed copies. Issued without dust jacket. \$1,250."). Coastal birds your thing? Keep an eye out for William Leon Dawson's *The Birds of California* ("Half leather. One of 350 signed copies. \$1,500. Patron's edition. One of 250 signed copies. (Also catalogued as 200 copies). \$2,000. Souvenir edition. One of 35 signed copies. \$2,500.") Can't get enough old British whodunits? How about Eric Osborne's *Victorian Detective Fiction* ("One of 475 copies signed by [John] Carter, Dorothy Glover, and Graham Greene... In dust jacket. \$750. One of 25 copies for presentation. \$2,000."). I cite signed editions, of course, and not every title published includes a signed edition—but a hefty percent-

age of titles in *Collected Books* include such editions.

By the way, very few books about autograph collecting make their way into *Collected Books*, most because they're not of enough stature or value to warrant inclusion—though I'm disappointed to find that Thomas F. Madigan's 1930 classic *Word Shadows of the Great: The Lure of Autograph Collecting* (limited to 150 copies and 300 copies, each with a letter from a famous historic personage tipped in) isn't here. You will find a handful of collector A. Edward Newton books about book collecting, and as for others—well, scanning these pages is one way the collector of books about autograph collecting will learn about them. Skimming it for books with which I'm not familiar will occupy many an entertaining hour in the weeks to come.

Which brings up one of the best uses for *Collected Books*: To show you some of what exists. One of the main drawbacks of collecting books using the internet is the absence of any element of discovery. If you're searching for a specific title it can be great—copies for sale only a few keystrokes away. But the internet makes a poor replacement for browsing bookshelves, where you never know what you may encounter. Most collectors will tell you that some of their best finds were items they never even knew existed until they found them on a bookshelf. *Collected Books* will also help steer you toward those titles.

No book is without flaws if produced by human hands, and *Collected Books* is no exception. Most if not all of the typographic errors I found were carryovers from earlier editions of this book: *Grapes and Grape Vines of California* appears as *Grapes and Grape Vines of California* and *Our Examination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* appears as *Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* and a few other minor errors. Odd that even after all these years and several editions these typos haven't been caught and corrected. There's always (we hope) a fifth edition.

One interesting change from the earlier editions of *Collected Books* and this edition is the addition of a running head at the bottom of every single left-hand page: "*Condition Is Very Important.*" Gauging book condition is one of the most difficult skills for new collectors, and knowing how to apply that when valuing scarce books is the greatest downfall—and the reason

price guides are often misused. “Condition Isn’t Everything,” the Ahearns note as a section head in their introductory material, “It’s the Only Thing.” It really is, and (a favorite phrase) *age is no excuse for poor condition*. The constant reminder of this worthwhile footer on the bottom of every page is, I’m sure, a direct reaction to constant criticism that collectors misuse price guides because they fail to take condition into consideration. If only they could’ve printed this footer in glow-in-the-dark neon red.

To pique your interest, let’s look at signed copies of a few more memorable titles, entirely at random. James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (“Limited Editions Club. New York. 1935. Illustrated by Henri Matisse. Pictorial buckram. One of 250 copies signed by Joyce and Matisse.”) listed at \$20,000 in 2002 and now at \$30,000. Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* (Camden, 1876. Author’s edition. Signed in ink on title page.) listed at \$10,000 in 2002 and the same amount today. Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (“Limited Editions Club. New York. 1932. Signed by Alice Hargreaves, the original ‘Alice.’”) listed at \$2,000 in 2002 and at \$3,000 today. Edward S. Curtis’s *The North American Indian* (“Cambridge, Mass., 1907-30... Signed by Curtis and [Theodore] Roosevelt...”) only noted a single 1995 auction sale at \$420,000 in 2002, but in the new edition lists a staggering \$1,500,000. And just to show that everything in *Collected Books* isn’t ultra high end, there’s plenty in the under \$500 range: Norman Mailer’s *The Naked and the Dead* (“Franklin Library. 1979. Signed by Mailer.”) listed at \$150 in 2002 and at \$175 today. Comparing price fluctuations between this and prior editions will be a favorite pastime for anyone owning earlier editions. It’s instructive, too, in observing who’s on the rise, who’s losing ground, and who’s treading water. Take the Holy Trinity of modern authors, for instance: Faulkner, Fitzgerald and Hemingway. Values for the signed limited editions of Faulkner are consistently on the rise (2002 values in parentheses): *Absalom, Absalom!* \$8,500 (\$7,500), *Doctor Martino and Other Stories* \$4,500 (\$3,000), *A Fable* \$2,500 (\$2,000), *Go Down, Moses and Other Stories* \$35,000 (\$25,000), *The Hamlet* \$10,000 (\$7,500), *Idyll in the Desert* \$3,000 (\$2,500), *Pylon* \$5,000 (\$3,500), *The Unvanquished* \$6,000 (\$5,000). A few of the signed limiteds remained static, and one (*Wild Palms*) actually dropped in price. The only publisher-issued signed Fitzgerald title, *This Side of Paradise*, leaped from \$3,500 in 2002 to \$17,500 in 2011. As for Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* went

from \$15,000 to \$17,500.

Collected Books represents price guides at their most exemplary, a thoughtful and thorough work that boils down a truly massive amount of data. It takes guts to step up and state in print, “Here’s what we think is worth in fine condition.” The Ahearns do it—about 20,000 times over. In our internet-obsessed age, in which writing online has the permanence of writing on water and it seems everyone has an opinion about everything, *Collected Books* shows there’s still a place for a printed price guide—that the internet is an impermanent, imperfect, highly flawed replacement. The Ahearns are to be commended for making this indispensable reference even more so. Let’s hope the future brings a fifth edition—and not at another ten-year interval.

A Rare Bookseller

I’ve been racking my brains trying to recall the most recent biography of a bookseller published, and coming up empty-headed. As for a biography of a *female* bookseller, no racking necessary—none exist as far as I know. The publication of a biography or autobiography of an autograph dealer is an even rarer occasion, so autograph folks have to content themselves with titles by and about antiquarian booksellers (*bibliopoles* as opposed to *bibliophiles*). Almost all booksellers handle autograph material—letters, manuscripts, author archives and of course signed books—some more than others.

Collectors seem to love books about booksellers, for it’s one of those professions many people fantasize about. Ninety-nine plus percent of them never will make the transition, of course. Jobs, tuition, spouses, any of a hundred circumstances such as not having the requisite knowledge and experience, always manage to get in the way. But it’s oh-so-much fun to read about those fortunate (or thick) enough to make a living surrounded by old books and papers, all day, every day. So we all, collectors and dealers alike, share this voyeuristic streak when it comes to booksellers. For dealers it’s a chance to peer over a colleague’s shoulder and observe their business methods—always enjoyable in this extremely individualistic profession.

Stuart Kells’ *Rare: A life among antiquarian books* presents the story of Australian Kay Craddock, a true rarity in the antiquarian book world: A female in an overwhelmingly male-dominated

field. It's a light, breezy read whose Australian setting will appeal to American readers. Despite our common language, Australian English, like British English, has its own distinct phraseology, its subtle quirks and charms. And of course anything set Down Under tends to have an offbeat, refreshingly wonky feel to it.

"This is the story of one of Australia's classiest shops and the three people who created it," Kells begins simply. Born in 1945 to Les Craddock, an agricultural machinery sales executive, and Muriel (a remarkable centenarian still involved in the book business), Kay was the second of three girls. Theirs was an unorthodox, imaginative, bookish household in which Kay wrote poems, made crafts, collected objects of all kinds, even curated an exhibit of her own paintings in her bedroom. It was, Kells notes, "a supportive childhood environment in which precocious cleverness is encouraged and creativity flourishes." When they joined a private lending library, it seems the seeds of a natural antiquarian were sown in young Kay.

Most bookshops are inevitable. One day the bookish person awakens to find that—*BOOM!*—he or she has gone from bibliophile to bibliopole. Sure, this transition may in reality take months or years, but in the end it always feels it was fated to happen. Thus, in 1965, Muriel and her daughter Kay opened the Essenden Treasure Chest in Melbourne with a "stock [that] lacked any coherent theme." Knickknacks, pottery, crafts, furniture—and books. Whatever the pair could purchase at local auctions and elsewhere that struck their fancy and could be sold at a profit was their guiding principle. It was trial by fire, with mother and daughter learning from hands-on experience, from trial and error. Only a few months after opening, Les (who'd had a heart attack at age 42) died of a massive heart attack at age 50. The inexperienced duo soldiered on, because they had to. Two years later they opened a second and larger location, the Bourke Street Treasure Chest, and in 1969 this became their prime focus.

The neophyte booksellers thus gradually became seasoned dealers. They acquired reference works, studied English and American book catalogues, got to know the colorful Melbourne booksellers, auctioneers and collectors. Slowly, they were becoming part of the fabric of the bookselling world, to the dismay of many a male bookseller. To call women booksellers a novelty at

that time would be putting it mildly. Australia was rather a Wild West free-for-all for bookselling, with no national association to enforce ethical conduct and high professional standards and to host quality antiquarian bookfairs. Australian antiquarian bookselling was certainly in a formative stage in the 1960s and '70s, with serious book collectors a scarce breed. "Not quite a biblio-wasteland," Kells describes it, "but still hard going for the book trade." The Craddocks, despite the prejudice they were experiencing, were getting in at the ground floor of this emerging market.

Eventually Kay and Muriel began issuing book catalogues. Their first (1968) included quite a few bookplates of famous persons signed by noted bookplate artists, and "Kay and Muriel were amazed and overwhelmed that they received any orders at all." The second catalogue received an order from heavyweight Australian dealer Gaston Renard—"Kay was elated." Fine press books and books about printing soon emerged as one of their strengths. By the time of Catalogue 15 "no bookseller anywhere in the world could claim to be offering books of superior quality to those offered by the Treasure Chest Bookshop." A few short years later their first bookfair catalogue appeared, a serious affair featuring scarce titles in many fields, including some choice signed books and an 1815 manuscript diary chronicling the diarist's love affairs—light years ahead of their first primitive efforts.

Catalogue followed catalogue at a good clip, establishing the Craddocks as dealers to be reckoned with and building up their clientele throughout Australia and the English-speaking world. In 1982 their modern literature catalogue showcased the Alex Hamilton collection:

In a... miner's cottage he amassed some 30,000 books.... The weatherboard cottage was lined with shelves that were filled with books. In the middle of each room were more books piled waist-high in tidy blocks.... Because of [his] obsessive care, almost every Hamilton book was in immaculate condition.... Ninety per cent of the books had been purchased when first published. Hamilton's avant-garde and foresighted instincts were astounding.... Every book in the collection was a winner.

It was every bookseller's dream, and "When the catalogues reached a select list of booksellers in Britain and America, all

hell broke loose,” Kells states a bit melodramatically. The combination of so many desirable titles in such superb condition at reasonable prices made the catalogue an instant hit. A couple of American booksellers actually hopped flights to Australia to search the massive collection. Not surprisingly, “Kay established a worldwide name for twentieth-century literature.” So large was the collection that one catalogue couldn’t contain it. A number of Craddock catalogues were heavy with Hamilton books, such as “Catalogue 100, which was organized around the theme of Cyril Connolly’s modern movement. This catalogue alone was yet another Australian landmark in the collecting of modern first editions.”

Upon just such specific collections and catalogues many a book and autograph dealer’s reputation is built. It is indeed true that, as Kells points out elsewhere, “antiquarian booksellers are measured according to the books they offer, and the intelligence with which those books are offered.” Kells also profiles a number of other notable collections (most with strong autograph aspects) that passed through Kay’s hands.

As the review of *Other People’s Books* in the previous *Manuscripts* issue brought home, association copies are a provocative and heavily collected category of signed books. Writes Kells, “For a book to become a desirable association copy, something significant must happen to it after it leaves the hands of the printer. This separates it from all of its brothers and sisters in the edition. The something might be presentation by the author or illustrator, as evidenced by a signature or, better still, an inscription to someone else of significance. Such authors’ notes and inscriptions can be priceless correspondence, containing facts and impressions not available anywhere else. Or the something might be that the book passed through the hands of an illustrious person otherwise unassociated with the book’s production.” As early as 1971 “association copies emerged as a major strength” of the Craddocks, with Catalogue 18 offering among its association copies works inscribed by John Masefield, Lyndon B. Johnson and publisher William Pickering. A “first rank” bookfair catalogue in 2004 included “autograph letters from Edward Elgar and Franz Liszt... Peter Ryan’s copy of Hardy’s *Power Without Glory*... five rare Siegfried Sassoon items... and original artwork by M. Napier Waller and Christian Waller.” Choice autograph

material had become a regular offering at the firm now called Kay Craddock—Antiquarian Bookseller Pty Ltd.

Kells also picks out two incredible drool-worthies that passed through their shop. First, a worn run-of-the-mill copy of John Addington Symonds' book *Shelley*. This was Oscar Wilde's personal copy, bearing his early ownership signature and his underlined passages. Kells rightly reports that "this is not a case of frivolous autograph hoarding or mindless celebrity-worship. The book reveals information about its owner; what books he read, and what caught his eye therein.... the basis of an important branch of bibliographic scholarship."

The other drool-worthy is a stunner, and Kells understandably gives it lengthy coverage: Kay's offering of a pair of books authored by Queen Victoria, *Leaves from the journal of our life in the Highlands from 1848 to 1861* (1865) and *More leaves from the journal of a life in the Highlands, from 1862 to 1882* (1884). The first volume she inscribed to her beloved Scottish servant John Brown, "with whom she had shared a remarkably intimate and resilient bond"—check out the 1997 British drama *Mrs. Brown* with Judi Dench—and the second she inscribed just after Brown's death to his brother Hugh, who also worked for her. In 1872 John Brown foiled an assassination attempt on the Queen by a disgruntled Irish youth. He was dear to the monarch in many ways (the second volume even bears a printed dedication to him), as this rare pair eloquently attests. The high-end English dealer from whom Kay purchased these so regretted "the books escape" from his inventory that he joined with another English dealer to buy them back!

Kay Craddock's rising status in the antiquarian bookselling world is a recurring theme in *Rare*. Her acceptance as a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association (ABA) of Britain in 1972 proved a pivotal sign of acceptance—and timely, for she earned the right to exhibit at the first Australian Antiquarian Booksellers Fair, "a milestone for the Australian antiquarian book trade as a whole." At that time Australia had no national branch of the ILAB (International League of Antiquarian Booksellers) of its own. Kells chronicles the 1974 seeds of the Australian and New Zealand Association of Antiquarian Booksellers (ANZAAB) in detail—at times an "amicable, businesslike and productive" process, at other times anything but, with "Fisticuffs

and other punishments... threatened [and] insults traded." Its creation became a drawn-out affair, but Kay was at the forefront and she and her mother were among its eight founding members at its first annual meeting in 1980. In 1986 Kay was elected ANZAAB's first female president (and third president, serving until 1989); in 2000 she was elected ILAB's first female president (and eighteenth president, serving until 2002); and in 2006 she was one of the past ILAB presidents whose "continual and exceptional services to the League" earned her election as "President of Honour." Kay's tenures in these offices brought attention to the role of women as booksellers and no doubt helped bring more females into the fold. And outside these presidencies, she was instrumental in arranging to have the ILAB Congress and International Antiquarian Bookfair held in Sydney in 1997 and in Melbourne in 2004—a feat many thought would never happen.

Life occurs chaotically and chronologically rather than thematically, and Kells confronts other issues that recur as Kay and Muriel address the many challenges of antiquarian booksellers. Kay, for instance, makes the occasional buying trip abroad, none more memorable than her first. In England some dealers such as the late great Anthony Rota "treated her with gentlemanly respect, and as a colleague of equal, albeit incipient, status." At too many others, though, she "elicited great suspicion, or mere contempt, from proprietors and staff alike." Like many booksellers, she takes a stab at publishing. In 1975 her firm publishes *The Lincolnshire Observer*, a tiny printing of a 19th century ship's newspaper.

And all too typically, there were address changes for the firm. Kay and Muriel endure difficult moves from the "poorly maintained and ageing building" on Bourke Street to a "two-storey nineteenth-century building that had thirteen rooms" on King Street in 1976, from there to a "new first-floor shop, which overlooked Melbourne's famous tree-lined boulevard" on St. Kilda Road in 1980, from there with its "lack of parking and... burdensome rent increases" to choice digs in a former bank on Flinders Lane in 1985, from there with renovations and a lost lease (fought in court, nearly driving the firm to bankruptcy) to a neo-Gothic building (nothing "looks more elegant, more evocative of the past, and more thoroughly bookshoppish") on Collins Street in 1990—where they remain today. This musical

chairs is a familiar routine to many an antiquarian bookshop.

Oh yes, and squeezed in there somewhere Kay managed to have a personal life as well. Her marriage to an auctioneer in 1977 ended in divorce in 1995. In the late '90s she was reintroduced to Jonathan Burdon, a noted thoracic specialist whose family she'd known in her first years as a bookseller. Friendship gradually bloomed into romance, and in 2004 they wed. Retired from medicine, Burdon now deals part-time in military books and his firm Pilgrim Books operates through Kay's website.

Rare: A life among antiquarian books is as its title suggests: The biography of a remarkable woman making her way and leaving a big mark in a largely man's world. Kay Craddock's is a memorable life, ably told. "In her years as the pre-eminent Australian on the international book scene," writes Kells, "Kay was an outsider, a role in which she was already well practiced. In the Australian book trade the Craddocks were an anomaly because their approach broke the mould of the gentleman bookseller." *Rare* will give autograph collectors a rare glimpse into the dealings of a contemporary antiquarian bookseller who handles a range of fine bookish autograph material.