

Wayzgoose: Setting Records

Book collector CHESTER GRYSKI finds annual sustenance and reasons for optimism at Grimsby's spring book arts fair.



*Left: Margaret Lock and Fred Lock of Locks' Press at the April 2011 Grimsby Wayzgoose. Margaret Lock organized the exhibition *The Nature of Words* at the Grimsby fair, to which she contributed several broadsides. Right: Will Rueter of the Aliquando Press was among those exhibiting at the Grimsby Wayzgoose, which featured his *Peace Tower*. Photos courtesy of Chester Gryski*

THIS WAS THE 33RD wayzgoose at the Grimsby Public Art Gallery in Grimsby, on the shores of Lake Ontario, and in addition to extending the longevity record, it also set records for number of participants at the wayzgoose proper (46) and in the *Wayzgoose Anthology* (35).

As a collector of fine printing, I find attending this wayzgoose is one of the highlights of my year. I get to see and handle what's new. I meet old friends and, more important, the new printers—people I might otherwise never find out about. I try to encourage all of their endeavours and build my collection by purchasing some of the books and broadsides. I leave the wayzgoose every year with new books, broadsides and memories, knowing they are each essential to sustain me until the next year's event.

The 2011 wayzgoose was spread throughout

the Grimsby Public Art Gallery. In the main room, I spoke with George Walker, who was displaying a single copy of his latest wordless novel, *The Mysterious Death of Tom Thomson*. The wood engravings were hand-printed by Walker on a Stonehenge rag archival paper and bound in cloth. Copies will be housed in a clamshell box. The edition is limited to 39 copies. Copies were not yet available to be purchased but orders could be left. For those who cannot fit this book on their shelves—copies sell for \$1,200—there will be a trade edition forthcoming from Walker's neighbour at the wayzgoose, the Porcupine's Quill.

Porcupine's Quill simplified my next acquisition. Tim and Elke Inkster had Walker's edition of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, illustrated with wood engravings, available for sale, a trade edition published by the press. The

engravings originally appeared in the Cheshire Cat Press edition of *Alice in Wonderland*, published in 1988. This is not a facsimile of that edition but another fine example of bookmaking from Tim Inkster. The 1988 edition was limited to 177 copies and was printed by hand by the late Bill Poole at his Poole Hall Press. George readily agreed to sign my copy of the new edition, and did so with a backwards-written inscription.

The Porcupine's Quill had brought along other books by Walker plus books relating to wood engraving as well as previous issues of *DA (Devil's Artisan)*, which turned 30 this year. To celebrate this anniversary, *DA* commissioned Wesley Bates to do a special wood engraving that was issued in a limited number of 100 copies.

Larry Thompson and Holly Dean of Greyweathers Press were also present. Greyweathers' most recent publication is *Graven Images*, an important contribution to the history of trade printing in Ontario. The edition prints 14 wood-engraved blocks from the 19th century that were found together in Brockville, Ontario. Thompson was able to identify some of the engravers. These blocks originated from engravers known to have worked in Boston and Montreal, and provide some insight into the movement of printing trade equipment in eastern North America.

Weathervane Press from Orleans, Ontario, was new to me. The proprietor is Steven Quick. In time for the centenary of the birth of Marshall McLuhan, he had printed a broadside entitled *The Ballad of Marshall McLuhan*.

Steven Quick was also the representative of the Ottawa Press Gang, a loose organization of book artists who periodically get together to share stories and advice and occasionally collaborate. As the representative, Quick had at his table some of the work of the other members. The collaborative project that I saw was entitled *Fables*. It had signatures on this theme produced by the Weathervane Press, the Cranky Press, Three Bats Press, the Grunge Papers, Greyweathers Press and Thee Hellbox Press bound together.

I also met members of the Book Arts Guild of Richmond Hill, another group who gather together for mutual support. The formation and existence of these two

groups is a real cause for optimism about the future of book arts in Ontario.

La Papeterie Saint-Armand was selling paper, of course. Denise Lapointe of the paper mill displayed her own book *La fatigue du matériau*. The visuals in her book are created using rusting objects, with the result that no two books are identical. David Carruthers, the proprietor of La Papeterie Saint-Armand, had for sale his own book entitled *Ungava*, using Saint-Armand Ungava text and wave pattern wrappers, papers that he had made. The text was printed by Pierre Filion of Les Éditions du Silence, whose press can be found in Montreal at the premises of La Papeterie Saint-Armand. I missed seeing Pierre Filion, whose interesting work is unfortunately not sufficiently known outside of Quebec.

EXHIBITION GOES ABOVE AND BEYOND

The organizers of the wayzgoose created an impressive environment in the Art Gallery room. On the walls and in display cabinets was presented the exhibition *The Nature of Words*, which showed the work of, among others, Margaret Lock, Will Rueter, Don Taylor and Wendy Cain. In the centre of this room were the tables of Margaret and Fred Lock of Locks' Press, Will Rueter of the Aliquando Press and Don Taylor of the Pointyhead Press. Cain, who has been at the wayzgoose in other years and who contributed to this year's *Wayzgoose Anthology*, was not in attendance this year.

I was overwhelmed and delighted by this exhibition. Work by Margaret Lock, Will Rueter, Reg Beatty, Don Taylor, and Wendy Cain took me way beyond what I had seen from their heads and hands before. Margaret Lock wrote about this show in *Amphora* 156 (see "The Nature of Words," page 25). While talking with Will Rueter, I looked up and behind him was his *Peace Tower*, 15 boxes stacked with a quotation about peace written in 15 languages.

I made excellent additions to my private press collection in this room, adding from the Aliquando Press *Becoming Love with Love: Three Poems by Hadewijch*, an interesting book of 13th-century poetry illustrated with Rueter's linocuts, printed on gozen kozo paper. The text was set by him in Unciala and Palatino

(each language, Dutch and English, merits a distinctive font) and printed on Nideggen. I also acquired *Taking the Sun for a Walk*, with text and wood engravings by Brian Kelley. For this text, Rueter used Jim Rimmer's type Fellowship.

Margaret Lock had several broadsides that I had not seen before. The newest one was *Sigh No More, Ladies, Sigh No More*, with a text by Shakespeare and a woodcut by Lock based on the painting *Two Venetian Women on a Balcony*. by Vittore Carpaccio. The broadside was printed on a sheet 46 by 29 cm of Ansell handmade paper and could be purchased coloured or plain.

The text and the engraving of *Who Is Sylvia? What Is She?* was printed on a Saunders Waterford 190 gsm hot-pressed paper that measured 37 by 16 cm. Also available were copies of Lock's *Blow Blow Thou Winter Wind* and *Honor, Riches, Marriage, Blessing*. On display as part of the exhibition was Lock's *Dialogue between Ulysses and the Siren*, by William Wordsworth. This is a magnificent accordion-fold book consisting of 10 panels, with coloured engravings and calligraphy by the artist.

Don Taylor, bookbinder but also proprietor of the Pointyhead Press, was offering copies of *Wrapped Trees of Dovercourt Present "Annabel Lee"* by Edgar Allan Poe. The text by Poe was illustrated with photographs by Don Taylor of trees wrapped to protect them from the winter's snow and frost. On the walls was Taylor's calligraphy—unexpected and fascinating.

A welcome addition to this room was Alan Stein. Alan was showing his *Golden Lilies*, a collection of eight new glosas by P.K. Page. Alan excels in drawing in pastel, but these works were not on display.

ANTHOLOGY SURPRISES AND DELIGHTS

The last purchase I made was the *Wayzgoose Anthology* for 2011. It is a bargain at \$80, containing signatures from 35 presses. Because of distance, not all were present at the wayzgoose, but the anthology gave me an opportunity to see what the proprietors of ambicerebri publications in Saanichton, B.C., and Mountain Flower Press of Campbell River can do.

Some presses limit the press run to the number required for the anthology, making this

the only way to obtain a copy. Thee Hell Box Press, AmpersandAmersand and ambicerebri were among those so limiting editions of their signatures.

One of the real delights of the anthology is that you are constantly surprised by what you find. The signatures differ in subject matter, method of illustration, type, paper and the like. One that caught my eye is *The Mysterious Death of Tom Thomson*. This signature with George Walker's contribution contains four of the wood engravings from his wordless novel printed from the original blocks.

Gerard Brender à Brandis submitted *My Name Is Ebby*. He wrote and printed the text and added seven of his wood engravings. Jackson Creek Press provided *To Silver Peak, Killarney Provincial Park, Ontario, Canada*, with a poem illustrated with either woodcuts or linocuts, I could not tell.

The Free North Press contributed two signatures—one with linocuts by Ali Hall, Dmitry Bondarenko and Stefan Berg, and the other with work by Justin Labine, Colin Berkley Rogers, Gideon Naf and Steven D. Rollings. They have displayed a conception and skill that bodes well for book arts here.

Wendy Cain of Rogues' Hollow Press provided a handmade sheet of abaca paper watermarked with a rabbit because it is the Year of the Rabbit. The contribution from Greyweathers Press was a study for an upcoming book, *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*. Based on this taste, I am looking forward to the book. Thee Hellbox Press submitted a text that makes one sit up and take notice. Copies of the anthology are still available at the Grimsby Art Gallery, and you should get your own to see for yourself why I think it is delightful.

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~ Chester Gryski is a contributing editor of *Amphora*.

Copies of the 2011 *Wayzgoose Anthology* (\$85 includes tax and shipping) can be ordered through the website of the Grimsby Public Art Gallery, www.town.grimsby.on.ca/Wayzgoose. The wayzgoose, a free event, is held the last Saturday in April, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., attracting 2,000 to 2,500 people.