



# MINIATURE BOOK SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

NO. 101 - MARCH 2016

INCORPORATING THE MINIATURE BOOK NEWS

## Shakespeare in Miniature Exhibition at St. Louis' Olin Library at Washington University



And what is this?  
A tiny wristwatch,  
Sonnets Watchbook,  
that displays two  
sonnets in Morse Code  
via pulsating LED lights.





**Miniature Books**  
**Rico Onuma Memorial Auction**  
From  
**Lilliput Oval Saloon (1979 - 2015)**  
Owned By  
**Kazushige Onuma, Tokyo**

Part I: Thursday, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
Part II: Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016

11:00 am Pacific Time  
Previews the week of the sale

SPECIALISTS IN EXCEPTIONAL BOOKS & PRIVATE LIBRARIES AT AUCTION  
BOOKS - MANUSCRIPTS - MAPS - PHOTOGRAPHS - WORKS ON PAPER

**PBA GALLERIES**

1233 Sutter Street : San Francisco, CA 94109  
415.989.2665 pba@pbagalleries.com  
www.pbagalleries.com

## President's Message



Stephen Byrne

I start this report with best wishes for 2016 to all our members. I hope that your interest in miniature books continues to grow over the year.

Changes are afoot with the editorship of the MBS Newsletter. Barbara Williamson has been at the helm for several years and has taken the magazine forward in many ways. She has now decided that it is time for her to hand on the task to someone else, and I am pleased to say that we have had a volunteer, Rick Hill, who has been collecting miniature books for many years, and who has a background in publishing. So to Barbara I say a great big thank you on behalf of all the MBS members. We have all appreciated the sometimes daunting task of what you have achieved, and the variety of articles you have elicited from members which have educated and informed us all. Thank you so much Barbara. I am sure Rick will be pleased to hear from members with articles for publication, comments and suggestions.

I know there will be information about Conclave within this newsletter, but I must encourage all members to consider attending what is bound to be a wonderful event, where we can meet like-minded friends, discover new material for our collections or sell our products, but most of all be part of the wonderful family of miniature book enthusiasts. Barbara and Ray have worked hard to produce what will be a wonderful program. I hope to meet as many of you as possible in McKinney in August.

I am often asked to give a talk or presentation about miniature books to a variety of groups. This is an excellent way to spread the message about the wonderful medium, and I encourage you all to explore this way to enlighten those who have never heard of miniature books. Do try this approach, spread the word, and let us know about your adventures in the world of miniature books.

## Editor's Note:

Dear readers, this is my last issue of the MBS Newsletter as your editor. I have been so honored to report on the wondrous world of miniature books and keep you current on the activities of the Miniature Book Society and its members. My deepest thanks and respect to Julian Edison with whom I have worked so closely during my tenure. With confidence, I put you in the experienced hands of your new editor, Rick Hill, from Fairfax, Virginia. Rick is a long time member of MBS. He retired from a long career in publishing and has collected and produced miniature books since the age of 17. I encourage you to contact Rick with your ideas and articles for the Newsletter. His email address is [olddisney@cox.net](mailto:olddisney@cox.net). I look forward to seeing all of you in person at the August Conclave in McKinney, Texas. Ray and I will be your enthusiastic hosts. Read about it on page 4.



**Grand Conclave XXXIV** will be held in the historic city of McKinney, Texas. McKinney is about 30 miles northeast of Dallas. McKinney has a vivid and diverse spirit developed from the history that shaped it. Established in 1848, McKinney is named for Collin McKinney, a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence. The city has grown from a cotton town to a vibrant modern city. McKinney has retained its charming qualities and sense of community, a special heritage attributed to the pioneer spirit of the city's earliest settlers. The city's crown jewel is the historic downtown district that is one of the oldest, most authentic and thriving in Texas. Historic McKinney serves as a retail, dining, entertainment and conference destination. With its upscale boutiques, galleries, dining, pubs and winery, McKinney is rich in tradition and charming southern hospitality.

**The Sheraton McKinney Hotel** is the Conclave venue. The Sheraton McKinney is located 30 miles northeast of Dallas at the intersection of Highways 75 and 121. The hotel is 35 minutes (depending on traffic and time of day) from Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) or Dallas Love Field Airport (DAL).

We have arranged for a Conclave group rate of **\$119 /per night (plus tax)** with a junior suite upgrade for just \$50 more. Hotel reservations can be arranged by **calling direct to the Sheraton McKinney at 972-549-4000 ext 2 and ask for the Miniature Book Society discounted group rate.** You can also book online at:

<https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/mbs> .

Hotel registration must be completed by **July 7<sup>th</sup>** to secure the special group rate that will be in effect from August 2<sup>nd</sup> through August 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Hotel amenities** include Sheraton Sweet Sleeper Beds, flat screen TV, free WiFi, fitness center, pool, Sweetwater Bar and Grill, full service restaurant, room service. On-site self parking is free. The MBS website will be updated regularly with additional information.

#### CONCLAVE REGISTRATION

**Registration fee is \$275 per person** and includes a keepsake bag, a special Conclave keepsake, dinner (with beer and wine) on Friday evening, 3 breakfasts (Saturday, Sunday,

and Monday), roundtrip bus trip to historic McKinney on Saturday afternoon, the Saturday program, a dessert buffet on Saturday evening (before the auction), admission to the MBS Book Fair, and the Awards Banquet on Sunday evening.



#### *Pre-Conclave Dinner on Thursday evening*

#### PRE-CONCLAVE DINNER

All members who arrive early on Thursday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, are invited to hop on the Sheraton's hotel shuttle at 6:30pm for a 15-minute ride to gorgeous Mitas Hill Vineyards. The vineyard will be at the peak of the Texas grape harvest and you will think you are in Tuscany or Napa Valley. Perched on top of a hill (yes, a hill in Texas), the glass-walled octagonal restaurant provides a lush 360° view of the vineyard. Known for its Texas WAGYU steaks, we will wine taste and feast on a fixed price dinner with 2 choices of entree. Dinner is at your expense. If you wish to attend this event, include an additional \$75 for a total registration fee of \$350 per person. We will return to the Sheraton via hotel shuttle.

#### CONCLAVE PROGRAM

**Friday, August 5<sup>th</sup>.** This is typically a relaxing day that includes time for members to check in, register from 2 pm to 5 pm, mix and mingle, and enjoy a special teeny tiny icebreaker activity. The MBS Board meeting will be held in the morning. Evening activities at the hotel include a true Texas barbecue with beer and wine, live music, the **Book Swap**, and the traditional **Silent Auction**.

**Saturday, August 6<sup>th</sup>.** Following a full breakfast will be the annual General Meeting from 9am to 10:30am. After the General Meeting we will have two workshops running simultaneously. Then you can enjoy an afternoon in quaint, historic downtown McKinney. You will board a bus to be taken to the Historic Square that is filled with wonderful restaurants, boutique shopping, antiques and art galleries, rare-book shop, Texas specialties like a salsa shop and hand crafted chocolates, winery and pubs. Everything is easily walkable. A bus will pick everyone up at 4:30 to return to the Sheraton. You will have the opportunity to have a meal on your own at a number of wonderful restaurants in the Square. The dessert buffet preceding the MBS Auction will begin at 7:30 p.m. Be sure to allow enough time to preview the auction items, as this is always a lively event. The distinguished auctioneer will be Father Joe Curran.

**Sunday, August 7<sup>th</sup>.** The MBS Book Fair will follow a full breakfast. Vendor set-up can begin at 8:00 a.m. Between 9:00 and 11:00 a.m., the Book Fair will be open only to MBS members and then open to the general public beginning at 11:00 a.m., concluding at 4:00 p.m. The Awards Banquet will be preceded by a cash bar reception at 6:00 p.m. with dinner at 7:00 p.m. The special speakers will be Amy Tingle and Maya Stein, operators of The Creative Caravan. These two teachers have toured the United States for the second year in a row in a teardrop-shaped trailer named "Maude". Maude is filled with handmade miniature books from scores of common folk on a wide variety of topics. Their cross-country tour called the "Tiny Book Tour" is stirring up much new interest in the world of miniature books. The Banquet also features presentations of the Anderson-Yarnell and the Norman W. Forgue Awards as well as the Glasgow Cup.

**Monday, August 8<sup>th</sup>.** The final event of the formal Conclave Program will be a full breakfast where participants can say their 'good byes' and/or prepare for the post-Conclave optional trip.

### POST-CONCLAVE PROGRAM

An optional Dallas bus tour to the Bush Presidential Library and the Stanley Marcus Miniature Book Collection at SMU Perkins Library is scheduled for Monday, August 8. We will leave the hotel at 9:30 a.m. via tour bus for Dallas. Lunch will be at the Bush Presidential Library restaurant at your own expense. The cost for this excursion is \$60.

### IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

**Conclave Registration: Deadline is July 7<sup>th</sup>.** Send payment and registration form (available on MBS website) to Karen Nyman, MBS Treasurer, 702 Rosecrans Street, San Diego CA 92106-3013.

**Sheraton McKinney Hotel Reservations at 972-549-4000 ext 2: Deadline is July 7<sup>th</sup> (1 month prior).** You must make your reservations, at this number, or by booking online at: <https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/mbs>, to take advantage of the Miniature Book Society special group rate.

**MBS Auction Items: Deadline is July 7<sup>th</sup>.** The proceeds of the auction benefit the MBS, please mail quality items to Cathie Abney, 3105 Milton Road, Middletown OH 45042-3656.

**Silent Auction Items: Deadline is July 17<sup>th</sup>.** The proceeds of the Silent Auction are split 50/50 between the donor and MBS. Please contact Karen Nyman before mailing the items (email [karenyyman2@cox.net](mailto:karenyyman2@cox.net) or call 619-226-4441). Mail to: Karen Nyman, 702 Rosecrans Street, San Diego CA 92106-3013.

**Keepsakes: Deadline is July 27<sup>th</sup>.** Keepsakes are a memorable part of each Conclave and the MBS welcomes all keepsakes. They will be distributed to attendees via the 'keepsake bag'. Please mail 75 keepsakes to Barbara Williamson, 612 Harvest Drive, McKinney Texas 75070-5383, USA.

Complete information and forms are on the MBS website: [www.mbs.org](http://www.mbs.org).

Barbara Williamson, Conclave Host  
[willibj1@att.net](mailto:willibj1@att.net)

## 2016 Miniature Book Competition & Exhibition

By Tony Firman

It's time again for a new Miniature Book Competition! Your entries must have been created since the beginning of 2014 (two years ago), but can be created at any time up to the closing of the competition on April 30, 2016. So even if you don't have something good on hand, you still have time to make something.

Here's a quick reminder of the basic rules:

- A book can be no more than three inches (76.2 millimeters) in any dimension; however the slipcase or other container or associated material may be larger.
- You may submit up to three entries.
- The book must have been bound and published in an edition of at least three like copies.

The entries will be judged by a panel of professionals in the book arts. Their charge is to select three winners based on creativity, appropriateness of the design to the content, personal appeal, and technical excellence in all aspects of design, printing, and binding.

The three winners will be announced at this year's Conclave in McKinney, Texas. The winning entries will become the property of the MBS, and may be incorporated into the MBS Travelling Exhibit for a year; eventually they will become part of the permanent MBS Archives at the Lilly Library of Indiana University. All other entries will be returned to their entrants after the Conclave, unless they are donated to the MBS.

All entries will be photographed in color and included in the MBS Competition Catalog. Every entrant will receive a copy of this Catalog, even if they are not members of the MBS; of course, all members of the MBS will receive a copy of this Catalog automatically.

One-of-a-kind artist's books can also be submitted for exhibition at the Conclave, and inclusion in the Catalog; however, they will not qualify for the Distinguished Book Awards.

Think it's not worthwhile because you could never win? You may be surprised! And even if you don't win, this is a wonderful chance to let hundreds of keen collectors see your work!

### Enter now!

Entry forms and past Catalogs are available on the MBS website:

<http://mbs.org/competition.html>

Paper forms and more information are available from:

Tony Firman, MBS Competition Chair

P.O. Box 507

Haslet, TX 76052-0507, U.S.A.

# MINIATURE BOOK NEWS

8 ST. ANDREWS DRIVE • ST. LOUIS, MO • 63124

## SHAKESPEARE IN MINIATURE

2016 is the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of William Shakespeare's death, and exhibitions, seminars and other events around the world are planned to commemorate this milestone during this year. Nearly everybody loves Shakespeare, and Olin Library at Washington University in St. Louis is holding an exhibition entitled **Shakespeare in Miniature**.

Presented in this exhibition is a selection of approximately 75 books (and a few manuscripts) of, by, or about Shakespeare's plays and sonnets in works that are in miniature format. These items range, in several languages, from the prosaic to the curious, and some in unusual bindings.

The First Folio of the Bard's plays was published in 1623. As the title itself explains, the book was published in folio size (17.5 x 12 inches).

From that date on there have been and continue to be various editions of printed books of Shakespeare's plays and sonnets. Some of those editions are

In miniature book format with almost all measuring no more than 3 inches in height, the usual definition of a miniature book. All are readable without magnification.

The earliest book or set of Shakespeare's plays in miniature book format is the nine-volume set published by William Pickering in 1825. Pickering was a renowned publisher at that time, known for his "Pickering's Diamond Classics." Pickering's books were produced, all in the same size, in London and comprised English, Greek, Latin and Italian classics. They were printed in a tiny but legible diamond type, which is why they are known as the Diamond Classics. The first set in English is the nine-volume edition of Shakespeare's Plays, published in cloth bindings. With nearly 50 lines of exquisitely printed 4 ½ point tiny type (ordinary newspaper type is about 6 point by comparison) on each page, these now rare books are gems of printing and publishing.

Some other highlights in the exhibition:

1) The smallest Shakespeare mini-book measures only ½ by 7/16s of an inch (13 x 10 mm), and, yes, its (24) pages are readable without magnification. It contains quotations from *The Merchant of Venice*, and was produced by Miriam Irwin of the Mosaic Press in Cincinnati in 1982.

2) The *Merchant of Venice* is also the play that has the most separate miniature book editions (14).

3) Four beautiful manuscripts with paintings devoted to the individual subjects of Shakespeare's Animals, Music, Flora, Insects, and from the heart, all with embroidered covers or inserts. These incredible delights were produced by Marian and Stephen Byrne of Scotland.

4) The most unusual and curious items in this exhibition are a book of Shakespeare's sonnets printed in Morse code, and a wristwatch that emits LED lights to blink two sonnets, also in Morse code!! The book contains all 154 sonnets in 359 pages of Morse code printed in straight lines.



The wristwatch (Sonnets Watchbook) is programmed to emit selections of two sonnets displayed in pulsating colored LED lights, in Morse code. It has red, yellow and green lights that can be changed to control speed and color selection. The two sonnets are sonnet 18 (“Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day”) and 130 (“My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun”).

Lydia Zoells, an undergraduate at Washington University, currently completing a senior thesis on Early Modern drama, assisted in preparing labels and other supplements to the exhibition, all as part of her work for a course in book history. Already an experienced student of early dramatic publishing, she found the later publications gathered for this exhibit fascinating — as industrial products, aesthetic objects, and social-historical evidence.

### **The Bard’s Bugs**

Stephen and Marian Byrne  
Sorbie, Scotland : The Final Score

These anthologies pull quotes from Shakespeare’s plays and sonnets, collecting them according to topic. Each quotation is paired with a hand-painted illustration in watercolor by Marian Byrne. One of the most interesting of these anthologies is *Shakespeare to Music*, which includes both words and music to some of the songs included in Shakespeare’s plays. According to the preface, “The works of William Shakespeare are full of musical references which attest to the Bard’s thorough knowledge of contemporary music. It is known that music and the theatre were closely linked, there being instrumental music before a play began, between acts, during intervals and following the performance.”

Marian and Stephen Byrne are a married couple from Scotland who create miniature books as a hobby. Stephen is the printer and bookbinder, and Marian makes the illustrations and embroiders the covers by hand. The Byrnes are retired from careers in primary education and are also accomplished amateur musicians. They create each book from scratch, and no two are the same even within their small editions.

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## SHAKESPEARE IN MINIATURE EXHIBITION POSTER

Shakespeare is the best known of all the authors in the English canon, and his name carries immense cultural weight for speakers and readers of English. It is important to remember that the bulk of Shakespeare’s literary work was designed for performance, not for print, and yet, these plays have been passed down to us largely in the form of books, and it is in books—very small ones—that we celebrate Shakespeare’s work in this exhibit.

Miniature Shakespeare editions are interesting as a group because they reveal the emblematic potential of books. From the first fashionable and efficient pocket editions of the nineteenth century to the elaborate designer miniatures of the twenty-first, the unusual size of these books draws attention to the material nature of the text. These are books that are valued for their literary *and* their aesthetic qualities. Shakespeare’s plays function in a web of cultural and personal meaning that expands beyond the actual contents of the texts. The books mean something to us even when they are not opened,

and they are treasured partly for the associations they evoke. Through their decorative coverings and illustrations, many of the miniature books displayed here encourage us to treat them in this way.

Some of the books in this exhibit remind us at a glance of the other forms in which we have experienced Shakespeare (e.g. in the theater, in paintings, in film adaptation). Even the less decorative editions here could serve as comforting talismans. Their miniature format makes them easy to keep near in a pocket or a purse. These books are not only literary texts, but as objects, they also can represent a wide array of meanings beyond the text itself.

According to the website of Bo Press, the publisher of the pop-up edition of *Midsummer Night’s Dream* in this exhibit, “Miniature books are made for the same purpose as big ones - to be opened and read.” All of the books in this collection are legible to the naked eye, so they *can* be read, but what do we really do with books like this when we have them? Do we read them cover to cover? Do we flip through them? Do we keep them in our pockets? Do we display them on our tables (or in glass cases)? The answers to these and other questions will be different depending on the person, the book, and the circumstances; we encourage you to consider them as you explore the items in this exhibit.

Lydia Zoells

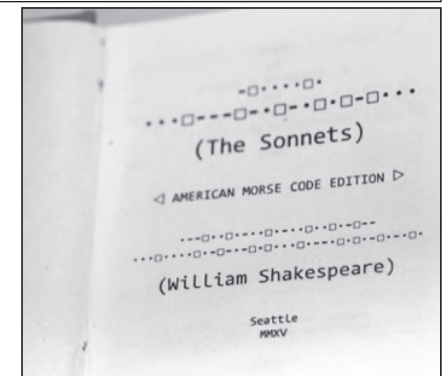
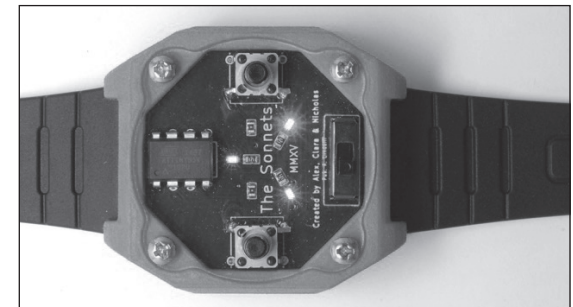
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## SHAKESPEARE IN MORSE CODE

This wristwatch and book were published by Robert Orndorff, an artist and technologist who lives in Seattle. For this year’s annual meeting of the Miniature Book Society, Orndorff brought examples of his recent projects: two miniature editions of Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* translated into Morse code, both of which are displayed here. He made the first book by hand using traditional methods and equipment. It contains all 154 sonnets in 359 pages of printed Morse code.

The other “book” takes the form of a wristwatch and was designed and built by a robotics team of three Seattle teenagers, Alex Miller, Nicholas Orndorff, and Clara Orndorff. Their underwater remotely-operated-vehicle recently placed first at the international competition sponsored by the Marine Advanced Technology Education Center (“the nation’s preeminent robotics competition,” according to the *New York Times*).

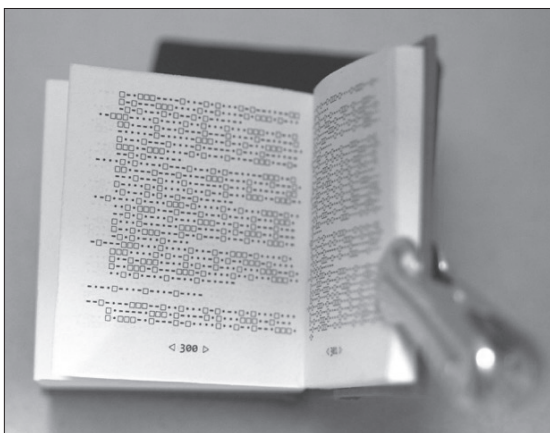
The wristwatch is programmed to spell out two sonnets, 18 (“Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day”) and 130 (“My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun”), with pulsing red,



yellow, and green LED lights. It has controls to change the speed and color selection. The book was published in an edition of 10 and the watch in an edition of 18; both have been exhibited and sold around the world.

An article about the wristwatch by University of Virginia Libraries staff member Kelly Fleming reminds us of Shakespeare's preoccupation with time. Orndorff remarks, "Shakespeare talks to time and personifies time. He exhorts us to make the most of our time and tells us how to outfox time. What better vessel for a sonnet than a watch, which spells out lines in one-dimensional time?" Sonnet 18, one of the sonnets broadcasted by the watch, proposes poetry as an antidote to the effects of time on a loved one's beauty:

But thy eternal summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st (9-12).



## TOKYO MINIATURE BOOK OVAL SALOON LILLIPUT AUCTION

Kazushige Onuma, the founder of the fantastic Miniature Book Oval Saloon Lilliput, as reported in the last issue of MBN (No. 157, November, 2015), has closed his shop. It was a true one-of-its-kind store in the world. For over 36 years this tiny shop in the Aoyama district of Tokyo, Japan, offered only miniature books. The shop had been managed by his only daughter, Rico, since its beginning in 1979. Sadly she died last year at age 56, and Onuma decided, after a lot of personal anguish, that the shop would be closed and the books would now be offered for sale at auction.

Onuma had been president of a large company, Periodica Japonica, that distributed foreign academic periodicals. His son, Mikio, is the current president, and now Onuma told me that at age 86 he wanted to spend the rest of his life with his wife, who has been ill, and the joy of his hobby of six racing horses in suburban Tokyo. He is very proud that one of his horses, "Nuovo Cimento" has won four races.

We are advised that the PBA Galleries in San Francisco has been engaged to offer the books from the shop. PBA has informed us that the first auction date has been set for Thursday, August 18, 2016 at their galleries in San Francisco. The sale comes just 10 days after the end of the MBS Conclave in McKinney, Texas

(near Dallas-Fort Worth) on August 5-8, 2016.

Gregory Jung, PBA Senior Specialist and Auctioneer also informed me that the catalogue will be available at the Conclave. He indicated that the collection comprises thousands of miniature volumes, antiquarian and modern, and that a second auction may be necessary. For further information you may contact Gregory Jung at [greg@pbagalleries.com](mailto:greg@pbagalleries.com).

The full title for the sale will be:

Miniature Books, The Rico Onuma Memorial Auction  
From Lilliput Oval Saloon (1979-2015)  
Owned by Kazushige Onuma, Tokyo

PBA has been the most active auction house for miniature books in recent years. They concentrate on books and allied material exclusively, and conduct a sale about every two weeks. Representatives from PBA have reserved display space at the Book Fair portion of the Conclave and will have catalogues available then. This may be the largest sale of miniature books offered at auction since the Arthur A. Houghton, Jr. sale at Christies in London in 1979.

Your editor visited the Oval Saloon on a trip to Tokyo in 2010. It was an overwhelming experience. Rico did not speak English, but the tiny space was crowded with glass cases holding hundreds of miniature books. Some photographs of the shop can also be seen in the November, 2015 MBN.



## SWEDISH MINIATURE BOOK PROJECT

In January this year, totally unexpectedly, Anne Bromer received the unusual email below, which she passed on to me.

“Dear Mrs Anne Bromer,

My name is Kristina Myrvold and I am researcher in Religious Studies at Linnaeus University in Sweden, currently working on a project on miniature scriptures for Muslims and Sikhs who fought in World War I but am also interested in earlier printing history of Sikh scriptures in India. I have read your fascinating book “Miniature Books: 4,000 Years of Tiny Treasures” and was very much inspired by your work. I am contacting you with several purposes:

In the first week of October 2016 I am planning to organize an informal workshop on “Miniature Books: Production, Print and Practice” at Linnaeus University. The purpose is basically to gather a limited group of researchers to exchange ideas and discuss various empirical and theoretical issues related to the production, uses, and material properties of miniscule books in historical and contemporary contexts. The workshop is open for presentations of any type of miniature books - religious or secular texts in the form of small scriptures, scrolls, etc. – as long as they are small. The plan is to later prepare an edited volume about different miniature books based on the papers presented.

I wonder if you would be interested in participating in this event and present your research on miniature books and, later, contribute a paper to the anthology? It would be an honor to invite you to Linnaeus University and so exciting to get to know about your long and extensive work in this field. I am just about to apply for funding to cover travel and workshop expenses for the participants and, if you are interested, would highly appreciate your reply before February 7.

Secondly, for my research project I am looking all kinds of miniature versions of the Sikh scripture Guru Granth Sahib in the Gurmukhi script. I have found several in India, where they are ritually staged as the folio versions, but their histories are very difficult to map. I understand David Bryce & Son prepared for printing an edition of the Sikh scripture but it is unclear what happened with it. Basically I wonder if you have come across any miniature versions of Guru Granth in your studies and have an idea where to start the search.

Hope you are interested in visiting Sweden!

All the best,  
Kristina”

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Sikh miniature books are uncharted territory, so we followed up with Kristina. She sent me a fascinating article she wrote, entitled: *Miniature scriptures for Muslim and Sikh soldiers in the British Army during World War I*. This unusual article with illustrations follows this letter.

Meanwhile, Kristina would like to know of anyone who would be interested in participating in the event she is organizing in October in Sweden. Here is the key information to reach her:

Kristina Myrvold, Associate Professor  
Religionsvetenskap/Religious Studies  
Institutionen för Kulturvetenskaper/Department of Cultural Sciences  
Linnéuniversitetet /Linnaeus University  
SE-35195 Växjö  
Sweden

Kristina.Myrvold@lnu.se  
[www.lnu.se/personal/kristina.myrvold](http://www.lnu.se/personal/kristina.myrvold)

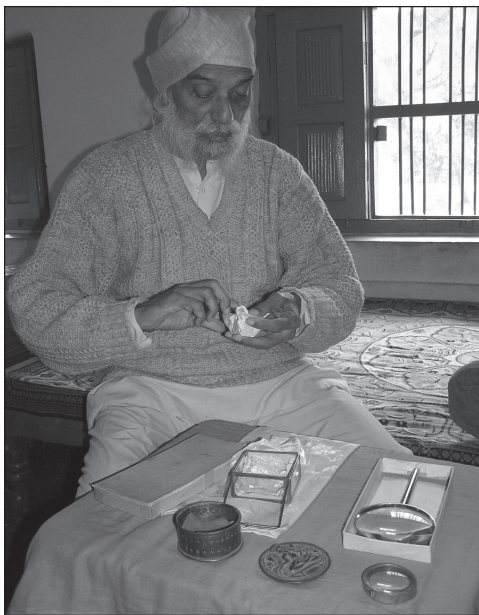
### **Miniature Scriptures for Muslim and Sikh Soldiers in the British Army during World War I**

By Kristina Myrvold

When the First World War broke out in the autumn of 1914, one third of the British forces on the Western Front were Indians of the British India Army. The provinces of India contributed with no less than 683,149 combatant recruits to the war between 1914 and 1918, and a major part of them were Muslims and Sikhs from the northwestern state of Punjab. In order to maintain military discipline and nurture the soldiers' religious contentment while they were dispatched to the trenches, the British provided minuscule editions of the complete Quran in Arabic script and the Guru Granth Sahib in Gurmukhi script, as well as miniature versions of religious symbols (such as religious daggers and combs for the Sikhs) that could easily be carried into the battlefield. A new research project at Linnaeus University in Sweden, that is carried out by Dr. Kristina Myrvold and PhD student Andreas Johansson in Religious Studies, explores the production, distribution, and use of miniature scriptures for Muslim and Sikh soldiers during the war. Based on new archival material and field studies the project investigates how various agents - charities, publishers, diplomats, nobilities, and others - were engaged in the religious provision for soldiers during the war and how miniature scriptures came to play a role for the complex relationships that existed between the colonial rulers and religious groups in India when the British national security was at stake.

Throughout the war large donations were given to different relief funds to aid the Indian troops. One of them, the Indian Soldiers' Fund, was established in 1914 with King George V as the patron and became an important charity to consolidate donations from nobilities and the public in both Britain and India. Through this fund miniature scriptures were distributed to Indian soldiers in war theaters and hospitals. For instance, Begum of Bhopal, the Muslim ruler of the princely Indian state of Bhopal, donated thousands of Qurans





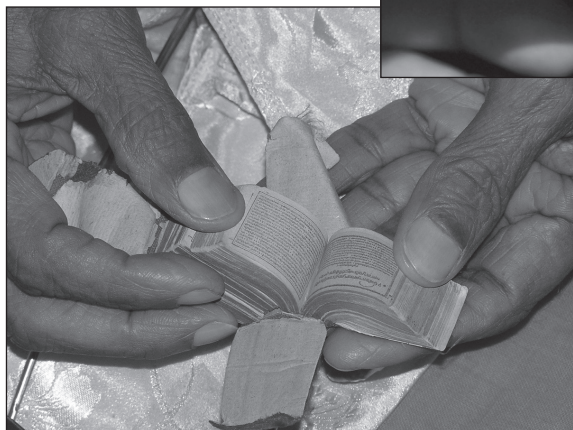
*Harnam Basant Singh, who has preserved a miniature Guru Granth Sahib from WWI in his private temple (gurdwara) in Ahraura, India. Photo: Kristina Myrvold.*

of different sizes, including miniature, that were printed in India. In 1915 Alfred Ezra, a Jewish Indian working for the Zoological Society in London, bought 3000 copies of "mite Korans" and a similar number of miniature Bhagavad-Gitas from the David Bryce edition to be sent to the trenches. Ezra also reported to David Bryce on the reception of the miniature Qurans after having received letters from soldiers:

You will be pleased to hear that the mite "Korans" (in Arabic) have been a huge success with our Mohammedan soldiers, and nothing I have given the men has been appreciated half so much as these exquisite little books. On receiving one, the man will stand up, put the book over his head and touch each eye with it, and then kiss the book with reverence. They nearly all wear them around their necks, and say that this protects them from all harm. I am sure it must be most gratifying to you to hear that your books have been so much appreciated (The Moslem World, Vol. VI, 1916, p. 205).



*Miniature Guru Granth Sahib at Ahraura, India. Photo: Kristina Myrvold.*



*Miniature Guru Granth Sahib preserved at Bhai Vir Singh Sadan in New Delhi, India. Photo: Kristina Myrvold.*

Similarly, there are several copies of miniature Guru Granth Sahib preserved in India today that are claimed to be produced for Sikh soldiers during the war (see photos). Oral accounts by contemporary Sikhs allege that the British Empire prepared up to 60,000 miniature copies of the Sikh scripture, although at this stage of the project it has proved difficult to find sources to support these numbers as well as to gain detailed information about the histories of the books. If any of the newsletter readers has information about the miniature editions of Quran and Guru Granth Sahib that were produced in India or Europe during the First World War we would be very grateful for your contact and kind assistance.

For the autumn of 2016 Kristina Myrvold is organizing a multi-disciplinary workshop titled "Miniature Books: Production, Print and Practice" at Linnaeus University. The purpose is to gather researchers to discuss the production, distribution and use of various types of miniature books (codices, scrolls, etc.) in different religious traditions and later publish an edited volume on the topic.

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## **Review of Anne C. Bromer's XI LIXIVMOS, Memoirs of a Bibliomidget Boston: Bromer Booksellers and HM Editions, 2015**

by Caroline Y. Brandt

This book is a joy to behold and to read. As was stated in the advertisement in the November 2015 issue of this Newsletter, it was written twenty-six years after the last miniature publication of this press. It is a memoir of David and Anne Bromer's adventures and trials in producing their eleven printed books. Happily, it also includes their three hand calligraphed manuscript books.

The book measures 2-3/4" x 2-1/2". The deluxe edition of 35 copies is presented in a clamshell case of red shantung lined with black shantung with a gold stamped black leather spine label. It was bound by Sarah Creighton in red leather boards with a beautiful gold-stamped vine design and spine title. There are further vine designs, both throughout the text and hand-calligraphed in red on the title page. Printed by Rollin Milroy of the Heavenly Monkey (HM) Press in readable 8pt. Centaur and Arrighi types, the book opens easily. Original calligraphy by Francesca Lohmann appears on the title page and in the colophon. To add to its charm, included are sample pages with protective tissue sheets from four of their publications, some with illustrations.

The 35 copies of the deluxe edition are priced at a hefty \$950 each but I can assure you this book will be the jewel of any miniature book collection. I understand there are a few copies still available. There will also be a regular edition of 85 copies in vine decorated paper boards, but only 70 will be for sale, at \$150 each.

[Editor's note: the reviewer is a Charter member and past President of the Miniature Book Society as well as a well-known and highly respected miniature book collector.]

# SPOTLIGHT on MBS member

## Ian Macdonald, The Gleniffer Press

**MBS:** Ian, we know you closed the award-winning Gleniffer Press in 2007. We understand sadly that you no longer make and sell miniature books. What occupies your time now that you've "retired"?

**IM:** The Gleniffer Press was established in 1968 and closed in 2007 when our final miniature book was published. 2016 sees me at 73 years old with several new interests. Helen and I still add the odd rare miniature book to our private collection but we do not consider ourselves real miniature book collectors, our interest was always more about publishing them. Since retiring: we spend lots of time in our ¼ acre garden which has a little steam railway that runs in the summer months to the delight of local children (big kids as well.) This was started in 2003 and is still under construction. I also keep my hand in as an electrical appliance inspector for our local community charity shop. When not on the air with my amateur radio station (GM8AVM) I am very busy making documentary films about other people's hobbies and passions. These little films are being archived at the National Library of Scotland for future generations. This year I am planning to make a film about miniature books, amongst others. Stephen Byrne might be a movie star yet! In February I launched a new updated website at [www.glenifferpress.co.uk](http://www.glenifferpress.co.uk) which we hope will keep all our friends abreast of our interests. Do go online and have a wee look!

**MBS:** How many Guinness Book of World Records does the Gleniffer Press hold?

**IM:** The Gleniffer Press has held 3 world records in microbibliography. The only record that still stands to this day is *Three Blind Mice* (1979) which is still the smallest letterpress book ever printed. Our *Old King Cole* which held the world record for the smallest lithographic printed book (1985) no longer holds that record. On Ebay last month, a copy of *Old King Cole* was advertised at \$3000. Wish we had kept a few!

**MBS:** What drove you to make the smallest book in the world in the first place?

**IM:** Making the smallest books in the world is a challenge in both printing skill and bookbinding. William Caxton was known to have made miniature books to test his skills. Although such micro books are really trivia and many serious printers do treat them with disdain, they are fun and a serious technical learning curve for any hobby printer to undertake. I learned so much from my mistakes...



**MBS:** Of all the miniature books you made, which one is your favorite and why?

**IM:** My favorite miniature book from our stable is 'Victoria & Albert'. Written by me, the book is printed on laid paper by hand set letterpress. The endpapers were by the famous paper marbler, Douglas Cockerell of Cambridge. Leather-bound with several copies gilded on all sides, it is probably the nicest little book

we ever made. A special copy was presented to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth by Renfrew District Council when she visited Paisley where we lived. The palace indicated that The Queen was very amused by the book as it told of her great-great-grandparents life as parents rather than as Queen and Consort.

**MBS:** Is it true you are on Facebook now?

**IM:** Yes, I am on Facebook now. I joined recently to keep in touch with all our friends and to publicise our new website. There are links on our website to the MBS and many other interesting sites which our friends say are fun to click on.

**MBS:** You and Helen were charter members of the Miniature Book Society. Can you share a favorite tidbit of memory from the early years of MBS?

**IM:** We are Charter Members of the MBS since our first Conclave at Tipp City (Ohio) in 1983 and on our retirement were made Honorary Members in 2007. There are so many wonderful memories of those early years for both Helen and I. It would be hard to focus on any single memory but what was evident and still is to this day is the spirit of warmth, mutual help and friendship that existed at that first Conclave and has persisted since then. This makes our Society a very special one indeed.

2016 is our golden wedding anniversary year and we have several plans for U.K. holidays and a 'second honeymoon' so we are sorry to say that we could not come to Texas to enjoy the Conclave fun. Please give our love and good wishes to all. Seeing the Glasgow Cup [*Established by Ian and Helen in 1990; Ed.*] being awarded each year to all those worthy members gives us a little glow every time and is our humble legacy to a great bunch of friends.

For more information about Ian and Helen Macdonald, visit [www.glenifferpress.co.uk](http://www.glenifferpress.co.uk) or on their Facebook page at The Gleniffer Press.

# Remembering Our MBS Friends

Long-time MBS member, **Juniper Von Phitzer aka Lloyd L. Neilson**, died peacefully on September 17, 2015, after four very difficult years with Parkinson's Disease. Juniper Von Phitzer Press was the joint venture of Juniper Von Phitzer (Lloyd L. Neilson), designer, printer, and binder, and Marvin R. Hiemstra, poet-writer. Established in 1976, the Press produced its first miniature book in 1985.

MBS member, **Alice Klauber Miller**, died on October 16, 2015. She was 102 years old. Alice, an unconditionally loving individual, was fiercely loyal and supportive; kindness, sincerity, humanity and generosity were her watchwords. She had an unmatched intellect that was quiet and humble, a wry sense of humor, and was a voracious and retentive reader with a photographic memory. Her love of antique miniature books staged a lifetime of collecting tiny volumes. Her most notable collection has been donated to the Wangenheim Collection (named for her uncle, Julius Wangenheim) of the San Diego Public Library.

MBS member, **Carolyn M. Killeen**, passed away on November 8, 2014. She was 91 years young and lived passionately, with purpose. Carolyn was born in Detroit on December 23, 1922. She attended Marygrove College and Wayne State University, where she received a B.S. Degree, majoring in Special Education and a M.S. Degree, majoring in Education & Clinical Psychology.

## CATALOGUE RECEIVED

Karen Nyman Miniature Books  
Miniature Book Catalog 60 – Jean  
Blackwell Collection

## BRIEF NOTES

Martin Wartelsteiner, Leipzig Hyperion-Verlag at miniboxx.de, announces a new four-volume edition of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. The set is richly decorated and designed, containing the complete English text, as well as many illustrations, on 1,516 pages of fine Indian paper. The size of each book is 1.50 x 2.09 inches. USD 125.00



*Insects* is one of the 8 books in the Nature's Details series. *Insects* is printed using Giclée, a museum quality digital printing process. The book is 1.87" x 1.87". Limited to an edition of 80, \$70. For more information, go to [www.mysticalplaces.com/details.html](http://www.mysticalplaces.com/details.html).



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## Miniature Book Society Newsletter

A publication of the Miniature Book Society Inc. Number 101

Issued in March, July, November. Items for publication, including advertising material, should be sent to the Editor. Publication deadlines are: February 1, June 1, October 1. Payment for advertising should be made to Miniature Book Society Inc. and sent to the Treasurer.

The Miniature Book Society is an international nonprofit organization founded in 1983 and chartered by the state of Ohio, USA. Its purposes are to sustain interest in all aspects of miniature books; to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas; to serve as a clearinghouse for information about miniature books.

**Website:** [www.mbs.org](http://www.mbs.org)

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Membership in the Society is open to all interested individuals, organizations and institutions. Membership dues in United States dollars: \$40.00 individual/couple for USA members, \$45.00 individual/couple for Canadian members; \$55.00 individual/couple outside North America. Corporate membership: \$50.00 (USA), \$55.00 (Canada), \$65.00 (outside North America).

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Manuscripts, letters and news items are welcomed and are subject to editing due to space and style limitations. Preferably submissions should be made electronically, by e-mail or disk. Attachments in Microsoft Word are preferred. Articles in the Newsletter do not necessarily express the views of the Board or of the Editor.

Deadline for the next issue: June 1, 2016.

Printed by Alliance Printing & Mailing Services  
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An EXCEL file of the miniature book inventory will be emailed to you. Feel free to ask for more photos on miniature books and/or the other collections.

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