THE GLADSTONE REVIEW

an occasional e-journal

September 2025: Issue No. 23

Informal commentary, opinions, reviews, news, illustrations and poetry for bookish people of philanthropic inclination

Contents

Editorial

It is difficult to avoid referring to the dark shadow that hovers over us, when its consequences are constantly on newsreaders' lips and shriek from newspaper headlines. And yet, on a global scale, how much promise for a humane, indeed, *kinder* world *could* be within humanity's grasp. I keep thinking of the opening lines of Dickens' Tale of Two Cities**:** *It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.*

In such times, it can be reassuring to consider how, against all the odds, some of us, at least, have come through the 'worst of times.' If only humanity had learned from earlier mistakes. For it is said that '*those who know no history are condemned to repeat the mistakes of the past.'* But the 19th century US historian, Carl Becker had some additional, perhaps more inspiring, advice: *The value of history is, indeed, not scientific but moral: by liberalizing the mind, by deepening the sympathies, by fortifying the will, it enables us to control, not society, but ourselves -- a much more important thing; it prepares us to live more humanely in the present and to meet rather than to foretell the future*.

As noted in the last Issue, this year marks the tenth anniversary of the Gladstone Review, in celebration of which, in the next few issues, I intend to reproduce some earlier- published articles - numbers 3 and 6 in the above list of contents. I am most grateful to Joyce D'Silva for her compelling article on the need to respect the welfare of farmed animals, and this issue also includes part 3 of my *Octogenerial Reflections*, which were introduced in Issue 21.

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2. The Curious World of Frank Buckland
Biographies of a Victorian Eccentric

A couple of years ago I was, as is habitual, browsing in the fusty backroom of a second hand bookshop that housed older - and presumably less-saleable - books, which were consequently offered at very low prices. I can never quite understand why 'old' meant 'cheap' - especially when they included, among many others, a leather-bound, gilt-entitled volume dated 1903: but I was keen for those reasons alone to relieve the owner of the supposed encumbrance. It turned out to be a biography written by the subject's brother in law. At the time it wasn't a priority to read - until, that is, I acquired a second biography of the same man, and was so fascinated that, enjoying them both, this review is the outcome.

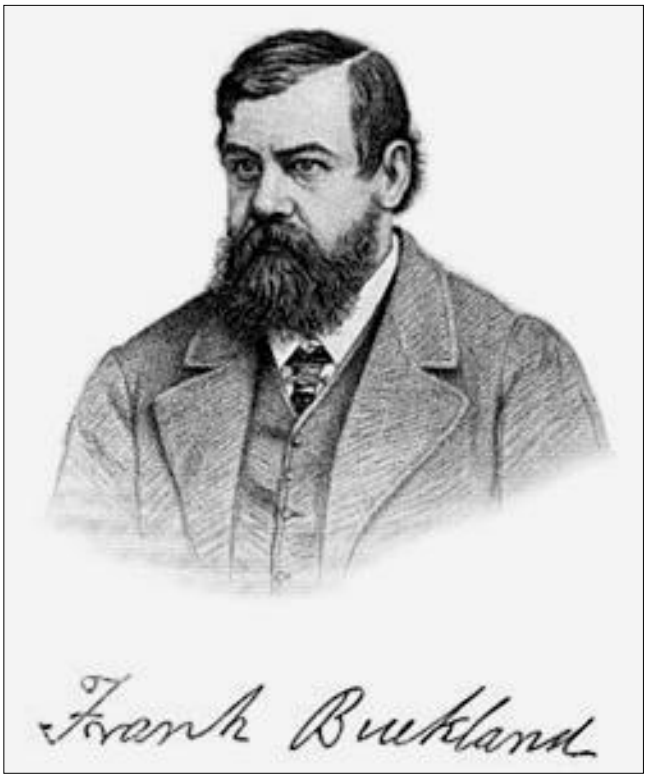
PROFESSOR AND MRS. BUCKLAND AND FRANK.

Victorian England produced a remarkable number of scientists and scholars, who although not becoming, in today's vernacular, 'celebrities,' led unusual, not to say, eccentric lives. Francis Trevelyan Buckland was born in Oxford in 1826, in a college where he was surrounded by natural history and animal life. His father, the Very Rev William Buckland, was then Canon of Christ Church, a geologist and compulsive collector of pets; while his mother, Mary, was a fossil collector, palaeontologist and illustrator. The above silhouette by Mary, evokes the style of their domestic lives, with young Frank, under the table, examining some monstrous beast!"

When 12 years old, Frank was sent to Winchester College, where he excelled in neither academic nor sporting fields, but his spare time was spent in learning about zoology, and in dissecting any animals he could lay his hands on! Like most public schools at the time, *Winchester was ill-disciplined and understaffed, the food was poor and badly cooked, masters flogged their charges unmercifully, while bullying of younger boys by the older boys was commonplace.* While still at Winchester, he continued to take an interest in animals, trapping rats and mice, dissecting them and sometimes, with apparent relish, eating them. Towards the end of his schooling, he was dissecting human parts, apparently obtained from a hospital- *on the sly,* - opportunities that fed his macabre curiosity and persuaded him to study medicine.

Following his time at Winchester he returned home, to Christ Church College, but this time as a student, from where he graduated with a BA in 1851. He then studied medicine at St George's Hospital, London; in 1852 was appointed a house surgeon at that hospital, and in 1854 became an assistant surgeon in the 2nd Life Guards. A fellow medical student offered the following observation*: Four and a half feet in height, and rather more in breadth - what he measured around the chest is not*

known to mortal man. His chief passion was surgery - elderly maidens called their cats indoors as he passed by and young mothers who lived in the neighbourhood gave their nurses more than ordinarily strict injunctions as to their babies. To a lover of natural history it was a pleasant sight to see him at dinner with a chicken before him - and see how undeterred by foolish prejudices, he devoured the brain.

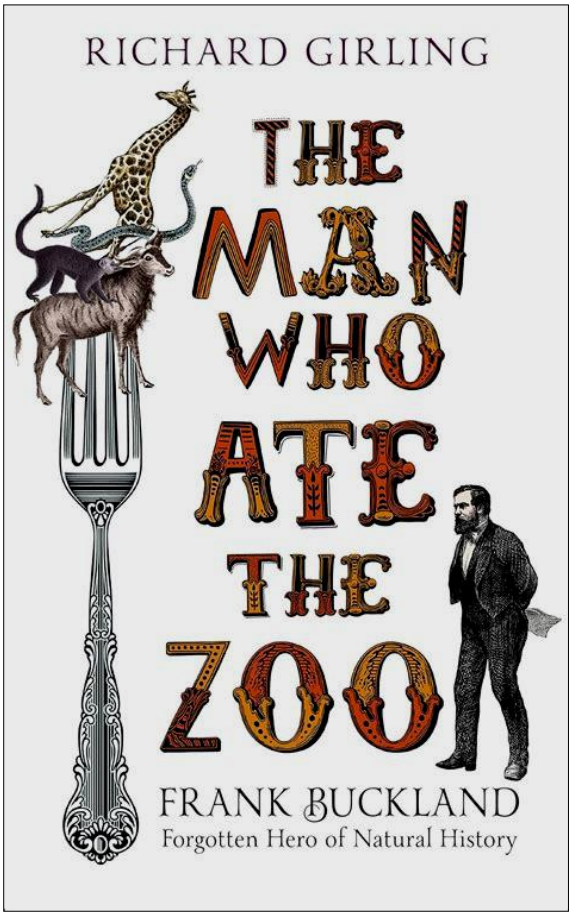


Buckland gradually abandoned medicine and surgery in order to devote all his time to 'natural history,' making a reasonable income by his contributions to *The Field* magazine, from the sale of several popular books and some sought-after lectures. But these 'respectable' pursuits were complemented by his enthusiasm for *zoophagy* - exploring the nutritional, economic and aesthetic value of eating animals. He learned this habit from his father, whose residence at the Deanery offered such culinary delights *as mice in batter, squirrel pie, horses tongue* and *ostrich.*

In 1860, Buckland set up the *Acclimatization Society,* to promote research on new sources of food from animals, complaining that although turkey, musk-duck and pheasant had been first eaten in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries- the same monotonous diets were still on the menu. In 1865 he began *Curiosities of Natural History* and also started a weekly journal called *Land and Water.* The changing front pages of that journal revealed its evolving emphases, with the latest, bearing the motto *hunting, shooting and fishing*: *practical natural history* - not the sort of natural history that nowadays is associated with that discipline.

But the most significant accomplishments of Buckland's activities concern his study of fish culture. When visiting Paris, he learned that Australians were keen to introduce salmon and trout into their rivers. In response, he hit on the idea of transporting ova embedded in ice, and discovered that by this strategy the viability of the eggs could be maintained for 100 days. Noting the success of the project, *Victoria* appointed him *Fish Culturist to the Queen*, a distinction which, along with his appointment as *Inspector of Fisheries,* led to him devoting the rest of his life to improvements in fisheries, in the course of which he collected a *vast amount of practical, scientific information on sea and river fishing.* For example he pioneered the construction of salmon ladders for the fish to return upstream, past weirs and dams - so entering their spawning grounds. Another practical development was his demonstration that nets made of cotton instead of heavy hemp meant that the extent of netting carried by a fishing boat could be increased five-fold. His curious mind drew him to explore the lives of a host of species (including invertebrates, amphibians, fish, birds, reptiles and mammals), often with an eye to exploiting those insights for their uses as food.

Even so, he had built his reputation as a natural historian and 'fish technologist' by the advances he made in salmon fisheries. But, in 1871, he argued that *this does not form the only part of aquiculture that requires scientific attention and regulation in this country,* for there were *thousands of acres of fresh water, such as the lakes in various parts of England and Wales (e.g. the Norfolk broads) the cultivation of which is absolutely neglected.* The message was received in parliamentary circles, with the result that in 1875 Buckland was instructed by the Home Secretary to inquire into the state of the crab, lobster and other sea-coast fisheries on the coast of Norfolk; and ascertain whether they should be placed under regulations to prevent waste, and to preserve them in future. In 1876 and 1877, his reports led to Acts of Parliament concerning the protection of the fisheries throughout the UK.



But there was another side to Frank Buckland, a quizzical, reflective side, reported in his diary. Some excerpts show this: *I ride generally down to the Fisheries Office on the top of an omnibus - a grand place. One can write notes there, smoke there, get fresh air, get wet through there. From the bus-top I see many pictures of real life. London streets and people in them are in fact a moving panorama.*

Then he reveals a belief in occult forces apparent in coincidences, thus: *Will my readers kindly notice, that if they see one thing of a peculiar kind they are certain to see its ditto, if not that day, then very soon afterwards.* For example, *Not long ago, I saw a little boy at the corner of Vigo Street. He was the most extraordinary bandy-legged and deformed little urchin I ever saw. In Parliament Square not ten minutes afterwards I saw a cripple, shoving himself along on bit of board - a fine companion picture to the bandy-legged boy.* Another alleged case concerned three red headed girls seen on the same day! *So ho*, he wrote, *my theories are right, three red-headed girls in seven minutes*!

According Burgess: *Buckland's charm lies to a considerable degree in the wide scope of his interests. He was not a great scientist, he was not really a scientist at all, but he had the gift of interesting his listeners in what interested him.*

Sources: G C Bompas (1903*) Life of Frank Buckland.* London Smith, Elder and Co: G H O Burgess (1967) *The Curious World of Frank Buckland* London, J Baker. Verbatim quotes are in *italics*

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3. The Significance of Book illustrations in enhancing mental reflection

I suspect that many people consider book illustrations to be very poor substitutes for digital forms of depiction - which on the illuminated screen can be so much brighter, crisper and accessible than those reproduced on paper that seem unwieldy by comparison. For it is arguable that, on the evidence of the widespread activity of staring at hand-held *iPads* in any circumstances that physically permit it (e.g. on public transport, doctors' waiting rooms, cafés, the chamber of the House of Commons etc, etc), such forms of portrayal, with their constantly moving (often *live*) images, provide instant gratification - satisfying a hunger for news, entertainment and catharsis, in the absence of which many people's lives might feel *empty*.

But it's worth questioning whether the technology used by such a large proportion of humanity (across all hitherto largely impermeable divides - age, race, social status, financial wealth, cultural norms etc) provides solutions to previously unmet needs or desires, or whether it has *created* them. And, indeed, whether having whet the appetite it serves up *haute cuisine* or just tasteless pabulum.

Of course, electronic means of communication have their uses; and can play vital roles in certain circumstances. But like all powerful technologies they can also have adverse effects on human nature, which were, almost inevitably, unforeseen by their inventors. Use by terrorists, bullying and sexting are obvious examples, but the sort of insult and smear issued, especially by leading politicians who tweet without scruples, might have much more widespread adverse effects.

In general, the extreme ease with which almost anyone, anywhere and often anonymously, can broadcast offensive, scurrilous or inflammatory messages and images must be a cause for universal concern, which suggests the need for much tighter controls to protect innocent people from harm. It’s notable that the inventor of the World Wide Web (www), Sir Tim Berners-Lee is apparently now attempting to address this problem; but the difficulties of doing so effectively are sure to be a major challenge.

But, apart from such overt abuses, over which there is probably little disagreement, I would argue that electronic means of communication are liable to have less-obvious, but often quite insidious, effects on those who use them routinely. There are several ways such effects are exerted. For example, the ease with which images can be viewed and then discarded with but momentary visual impact undermines the reflective aspects of consciousness that are essential to any sort of mental engagement. Like the adverts that appear on commercial TV channels, the transient images seem designed to induce a sort of hypnotic state, with carefully crafted subliminal images. (Unfortunately, the BBC now apes this approach, so that advertisements of future programmes on the same or other channels are repeatedly inserted between the scheduled programmes.)

Moreover, as argued by the leading brain scientist Professor Susan Greenfield, former Director of the Royal Institution, a major consequence of excessive exposure to electronic stimuli is that the structure of the brain, and hence its mental capabilities, becomes adversely altered. Affecting the same parts of the brain that enable London 'black cab' taxi drivers to remember the routes through the City (for proof of which they have to pass the stringent *Knowledge* test), and that in people who read books and do cross-words into old age has been shown to result in longer, healthier lives - in contrast the excessive exposure of young brains to stimuli from *iPads/iPhones* often has detrimental effects.

The evidence is now persuasive that what prepares young people for adult life is the ability to pay attention for long periods of time, possess self-control, and think in deep and meaningful ways about issues – the exact opposite of the *surfing* and *tweeting* mentality.

Addendum. To update the evidence , in Issue 21, under the heading *Mummy ! This fing (book) in't working. praps it needs a new batry*, my entry included the following:

The National Literacy Trust, which published its *Annual Literacy Survey* in November 2024, revealed some very disturbing trends. Based on over 76,000 responses from children and young people aged 5 to 18 in early 2024, it includes findings on reading enjoyment, frequency and motivation and explores responses by age, gender, socio-economic background and geographical region. Overall, the number of children and young people who say they enjoy reading, and read daily in their free time, is at its lowest since 2005. Only 20% of 8-to 18-year-olds said that they read something daily in their free time, while only 35% children said they enjoyed reading in their free time.

BM

4: Why Farmed Animals Matter.
Joyce D'Silva

External Value.

An obvious opening response to this title might be – Well of course they matter. I eat meat and eggs every day, drink plenty of milk and all this food keeps me well supplied with protein and keeps me strong. So, farmed animals matter to me.

If you are a peasant farmer in, say, sub-Saharan Africa, you might respond – Well of course they matter. I have seven chickens out the back, and they lay eggs, so most days I can give my kids an egg before they leave for school. I have a cow too and I milk her twice a day so all the family can have some milk too to keep us healthy and strong. She doesn't produce a lot of milk as she just browses and grazes outside the house. I can't afford to buy feed for her. We only eat meat occasionally, maybe when one of the chickens dies or gets killed by a bush animal.

If you live in a lush green country like England or Ireland, you might say that farmed animals matter because aesthetically the cows look so lovely out in the fields in the sunshine or the sheep and lambs spread out over the hillsides, grazing the tough grasses and wild plants that grow there.

If you're a large intensive farmer, you might rely on the profits from your broiler chickens, all 25,000 of them in your shed. (Hoping not too many of them die from the lameness brought on by selective breeding for fast growth.) Or you might rely on good prices for the pigs kept crowded together in your concrete-floored shed, when they are ready for slaughter at a few months old.

If you run a large pharmaceutical company, you might say that farmed animals matter deeply to your business's profitability, as well over half of the antibiotics you produce are sold for use on farmed animals, especially the ones kept crowded together in the intensive farms, where infections can spread like wildfire.

Intrinsic Value.

The big question is whether animals farmed by us for food matter intrinsically – do they have (non-financial) value in themselves or only in their value to us? Is a cow, for example, a resource or a distinct entity in herself?

This big consequential question has been debated by philosophers and theologians for centuries. Both the Greek philosopher, Aristotle (384-322 BC) and the Chinese philosopher Kongzi (Confucius) (571-479 BC) wrote that certain animals are there for food and their other abilities such as transport or ploughing that are useful to humans. The purpose of farmed animals is to be food for us. Even the famous philosopher Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) believed that nature had "made all animals for the sake of man" and René Descartes (1596-1650) viewed animals as machines, incapable of feeling pain. But opposing views emerged in philosophy. Jeremy Bentham, (1748-1832) the founder of Utilitarian philosophy, asked the most important question regarding sentience: "The question is not, Can they reason? Nor can they talk? but, Can they suffer?". The modern utilitarian philosopher, Peter Singer, believes strongly that animals are sentient, and he calls for us to give equal consideration to their suffering..

In the early history of most Faiths, sacrifice of animals to appease or appeal to the god(s) was common. In a non-scientific world, a thunderstorm or a plague could be seen as the work of an angry deity. By sacrificing your best goat or other animal, the deity might be appeased

Different ideas arose. Maybe the deity was somehow present in all creatures, and the animals gave praise to this deity just by being themselves. Certain contemporary Christian theologians believe that as animals are *fellow creatures of God*, therefore we must treat them with compassion and respect.
(My recent book *Animal Welfare in Word Religion* discusses these concerns in more detail.)

Scientific views.

What of science? The famous naturalist, Charles Darwin (1818-1882), argued that humans and animals show very similar emotions. But in the early 20th century Behaviourism flourished. This denied that animals had innate capacities for experiencing pain, suffering or pleasure; they were simply reacting to stimuli. This was the era of the development of industrial factory farming, where thousands of animals could be housed together in cramped conditions.

More recent developments in behavioural, physiological and cognitive science have led to a scientific and legal consensus that at least all vertebrates (mammals, birds, reptiles and fishes) and probably some invertebrates (such as cephalopods and decapod crustaceans) are sentient. They are capable of feeling pain, of suffering and of joy and other emotions previously associated with humans.

The logical conclusion of accepting that the animals we farm for food are sentient is that we should keep them in humane conditions where they can express their emotions and their psychological and physiological needs, such as play, exercise, friendships and mothering of their young. We can accept that farmed animals do indeed matter and their individual lives matter to each of them in a similar way that human's lives matter to each of them/us.

Some philosophers believe that acceptance of their sentience means that animals have an intrinsic right to live a good life and never to be killed just to satisfy a human's desire for meat. We should minimise interference in their lives and intervene only to prevent suffering. Naturally if you hold this view, you will not eat animals' bodies or their products such as eggs and milk.

Apart from this animal rights view, animal sentience is the driver for the animal welfare movement and the reason why animal protection laws exist. If farmed animals can suffer and experience pain, stress and discomfort from the surroundings and treatment they receive from humans, this must be prevented and welfare laws and practices adopted. Sadly, the law and common practices of factory farming have moved very slowly, and billions of animals are still kept throughout their lives in horrendous conditions.

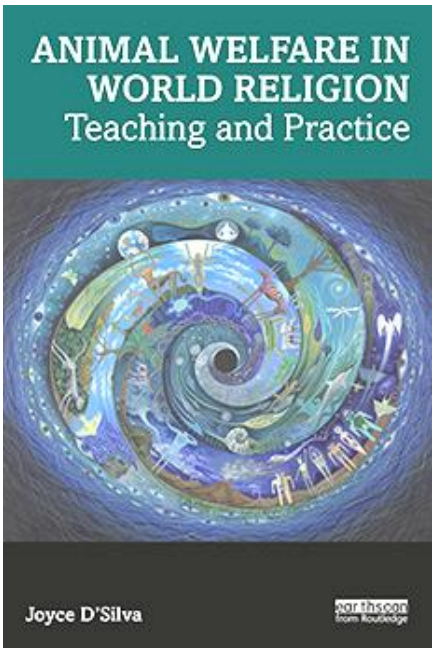
In the modern dairy industry, the new-born calf is usually taken away from his mother at one day old, although in natural conditions mother cow and calf would stay close to each other for several months. This removal of the calf is highly stressful for both mother and calf, and they continue to call out for each other for some time. The cow is then milked to capacity to produce milk for humans and artificially impregnated after three months. (The milking goes on for most of her pregnancy, so this cycle is repeated.) Although grazing is the natural way cows access nourishment, many dairy farms operate on the zero-grazing principle and cows stay indoors all their lives. They cannot access food, so it is bought in and fed to them. Much of this animal feed is based on imported soya beans and maize (corn) which could have been used for human food directly. These feed crops are also associated with rainforest destruction and monoculture pharmaceutical farming.

Pigs are recognised as highly intelligent. They can understand the location of a hidden food bowl that is visible only in a mirror, walking away from the mirror rather than towards it, in order to get access to the food. Many animal species are unable to do this. Yet these brainy creatures are often kept in conditions of utter deprivation in factory farms. The growing pigs may be in small groups indoors. The floor is made of concrete and slats (to let the droppings through). Pigs have highly sensitive snouts which they use to explore and to upturn the soil in order to find roots and grubs to eat. Now their snouts are rendered useless and may sometimes result in one pig biting another's tail. The usual practice is therefore to cut their tails off – rather than enriching their environment. The breeding sows used to be housed in individual concrete stalls where they could not turn round throughout their 4-month pregnancies. Some countries, including the UK, have now banned this practice, but it is still used in other parts of the world.

In industrial farming systems, broiler (meat) chickens are bred in huge hatcheries and never get to see their mothers, although hens naturally have strong mothering instincts. The chickens have been bred to grow very fast so that there is more meat on each carcase and farmers can get more batches though their farms each year. Their bone structure cannot always support this fast muscle growth, and many go lame. Experiments show that lame chickens are in pain and will intentionally self-medicate with painkillers provided in feed to relieve that pain. Most chickens do not get painkilling medication!

Conclusion.

Our companion animals mean a lot to us. Many dog and cat owners spend a fortune on veterinary fees to keep them well and pain-free. The opposite appears to be true for most farmed animals. Evidently, most members of the general public want the cheapest possible meat, eggs and milk. These cheap products come from the animals kept in industrial factory farms, where animal welfare is not regarded as an issue of relevance. If consumers were to care for the pigs they eat as much as they care for their dogs, then they would surely avoid the products of the factory farm.



Yes, organic, free range and regenerative animal products will cost more, but these systems have the potential to allow farmed animals to live flourishing lives. Can people on low incomes or benefits afford these products? That's a question for government and society. In one of the world's richest economies, surely everyone should have an income that allows them to make ethical food choices.

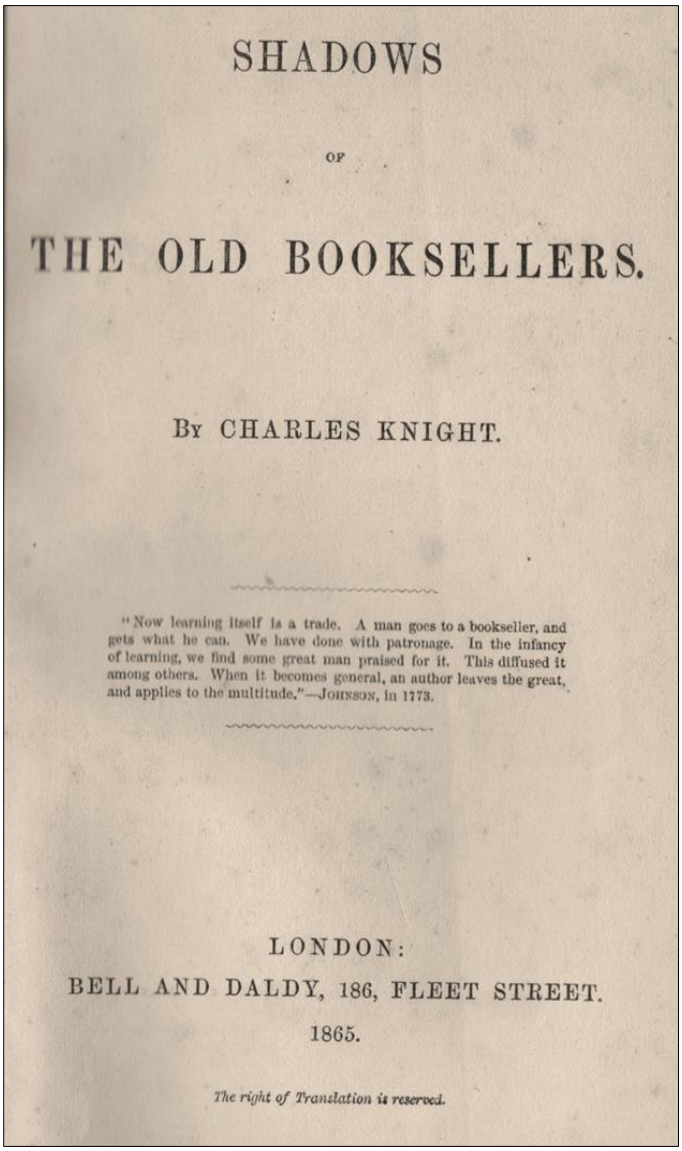
Consumers can also expand their diets by eating more plant-based foods, or even by taking the decision to avoid animal products altogether.

Farmed animals definitely matter. And this surely requires us to ensure that our dietary habits match our ethical convictions on the ways we should care for them.

Joyce D'Silva has an MA from Trinity College Dublin and two Honorary degrees. She has worked for *Compassion in World Farming* since 1985, including fourteen years as Chief Executive, and played a key role in getting recognition of animal sentience enshrined in the European Union Treaties.

5. An Eighteenth century Southwell Bookseller

Ardent book collectors rarely have time to read all their books as they acquire them, so that they often sit on the shelves, perhaps for years, before an opportune glance brings them to notice. One of the delights of book-collecting is the serendipitous discovery of some literary treasure that has lain unobserved, only to give unexpected pleasure after so long a hibernation.



SHADOWS

OF

THE OLD BOOKSELLERS.

BY CHARLES KNIGHT.

"Now learning itself is a trade. A man goes to a bookseller, and gets what he can. We have done with patronage. In the infancy of learning, we find some great man praised for it. This diffused it among others. When it becomes general, an author leaves the great, and applies to the multitude."—JOHNSON, in 1773.

LONDON:
BELL AND DALDY, 186, FLEET STREET.
1865.

The right of Translation is reserved.

A case in point is the book shown here, which was published in 1865 and inscribed by its then-owner, one Hugh T Sheringham of Trinity College, Cambridge.[1] I can't remember when I bought it (for just £3.50 according to a pencilled note), but I have found it a rewarding investment in recent weeks.

The book's title is slightly ambiguous, as it might refer to old books or ageing booksellers. In fact, the subject is eminent booksellers 'of old' – dating from the 18th century. And they were often not just sellers but also authors, compilers, printers and binders of books.

Among notable examples were the famous Dr Johnson's father, who sold books in Lichfield and Birmingham, and Thomas Guy, more famous as founder of Guys Hospital in London. The account of young Guy, son of a '*lighterman and coal-dealer*,' is especially poignant, as in his small London shop, *He spreads his new and old books upon a board in front of his window, now and then soliciting the busy trader who glances at them to buy Mr Wingate's 'Arithmetic made easy' or Mr Record's 'Grounds of Art.*'

A chapter is devoted to William Hutton, whose childhood was also hardly conducive to his subsequent literary interests. In 1730, *he was described as a poor boy, who at seven years of age, was put to work in the one silk mill in Derby*.' Like Robert Blincoe, who I discussed in an earlier Review, things went from bad to worse

[1] By internet searching, I discovered that Sheringham became a noted authority on fishing, writing several exceptional books. In his introduction to *Coarse Fishing*, he wrote: "*Salmon fishing is good; trout fishing is good; but to the complete angler, neither is intrinsically better than the pursuit of roach, or tench, or perch or pike*." For 30 years, until his death in 1903, he was the angling editor of *The Field.*

The gloom of the account almost persuaded me to dip into another bookseller's less arduous experiences , when, flicking casually through the pages my eye caught the name 'Southwell,' - in the way that we can often pick out, among hundreds of others, a familiar word in a subliminal fraction of a second. What transpired is represented by the pages reproduced below.[2]

SHADOWS OF THE OLD BOOKSELLER Chapter V111

On Page 160

Hutton whose tastes made him a book-reader instead of a collector of rare books, has no raptures about *such acquisitions.* The refuse of the poor book seller was probably rich in some of those *chap books* .. but which are now the choicest treasures of the bibliomaniac. When, a year or two later he opened a shop at Southwell on market days, he furnished it with what he calls *trash. One* would like to have a catalogue of that *trash.* His small experience would little qualify him to penetrate the mysteries of book-dealing.

On Page 162

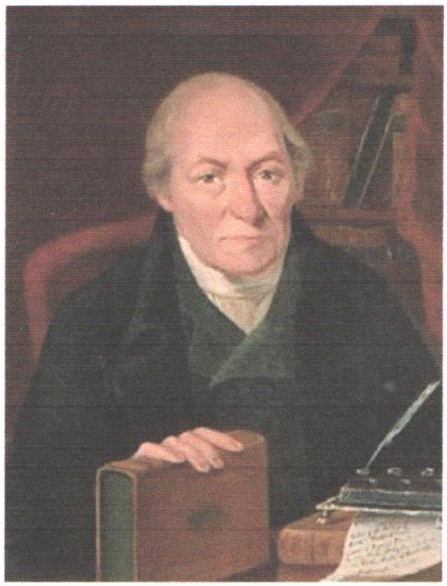
And so our adventurer trudged home from the south with four shillings in his pocket out of the eleven which he had brought to the capital (London) , and took back four pence to Nottingham, having been absent nine days.

William Hutton had now to look out for a fitting place in which to exercise his new vocation. Ever cautious he would not make too great a venture at the first starting. He took a shop at Southwell, fourteen miles from Nottingham, paying for its use twenty shillings a year. Here he deposited his stack of tattered volumes, and in one day became '*the most eminent bookseller in Southwell*.' He was not however a resident in this little town, now better known than it was a century ago, by being the scene of the *most sensible experiment in the administration of the Poor Laws*. The resolute and prudent man thus describes the course of life during a rainy winter. *I set out from Nottingham at five every Saturday morning, carried a burthen from three to thirty pounds weight to Southwell, opened shop at ten, starved in all day upon bread, cheese and a half pint of ale; took one s to 6 s, shut up at four, and by trudging through solitary night and the deep lanes five hours more, I arrived at Nottingham by nine, where I always found a mess of milk porridge by the fire, prepared by my valuable sister.* But as might be expected, the labour of such a life was great and the profit small.

Evidently, his bookshop in Southwell did not prove to be a success, and Hutton's fame rests principally on his subsequent move to Birmingham. Here in 1750, after a slow start, adding bookbinding to his abilities and cultivating as regular customers a set of young men interested in

[2] Reference to the Poor Laws, refers of course, to the Workhouse, now maintained by the National Trust.

essays and poetry led to him making substantial profits. He also established Birmingham's first Circulating Library shortly after the first such library had been set up in London's Strand

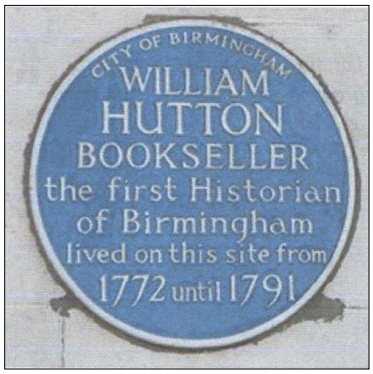


William Hutton, about 1780

But in 1756 he opened a paper mill, the first in Birmingham, which ensured a comfortable future and the ability to expand his literary interests, which included history and verse. He is credited with authorship of at least sixteen books, of which the most notable was *A History of Birmingham*, written in 1782, the year in which he was also elected a Fellow of The Antiquarian Society of Scotland.

As a Unitarian, and associate of the Unitarian minister Joseph Priestley (who is often accredited with the discovery of oxygen before Lavoisier, although he, rather unfortunately called it 'dephlogisticated air'), Hutton was a victim in the so-called Birmingham Riots of 1791, losing both of his houses. The controversial nature of Priestley's publications, combined with his outspoken support of the French Revolution aroused public and governmental suspicion; he was eventually forced to flee from Birmingham to the United States, after a mob burned down his house and church.

Apart from his distinction as a historian and bookseller, celebrated by the blue plaque on the Waterstone's bookshop in High Street, Birmingham, Hutton is famed for walking the whole length of Hadrian's Wall (there and back) – a distance of 600 miles. He was at the time, in 1801, in his mid 70s, and when writing about it later he suggested that he was 'perhaps the first man to have ever travelled the whole length of this Wall, and probably the last that will ever attempt it.' He died in 1815, at the age of 91.



I must apologise to readers unfamiliar, and perhaps uninterested, in this rather parochial fascination in an event occurring about 270 years ago, but for me the recollection evokes memories of the installation of Gladstone Books in Bull Yard for two years – 2015-2017. And of course, other booksellers have plied their trade in the town. I especially remember Gerry Graham, who used to have a book stall in Market Square for many years. But, like Hutton, despite my gaining satisfaction from chatting with customers and making available to them worthy books, the enterprise was not cost- effective and has led me, as a last throw of the dice, to continue to operate as a viable second-hand book business from my home in Southwell.

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6. Selection of Phrases and Origins: entries from Crowther's Encyclopaedia (1940)

In my *Words Words* series, there are many such reference books, with *Brewer's* probably the best-known. I took a fancy to Crowthers (published in my birth year), which it modestly describes as: *a war-time production, easy to handle, completely legible, takes up less space on your bookshelf, is cheaper to post and withal is full length and value*! Here's just a small selection.

White Elephant: This means a venture that has never seen a profit and is unlikely to. The original White Elephant is that of Siam, where the beast was regarded as sacred, and was maintained accordingly. It was the custom of the King of Siam when he wanted to dispose of the services of a courtier who had become obnoxious to him, to make the courtier a present of a white elephant. The recipient was usually ruined by the cost of the animals maintenance!

Soldier: Was called from the Latin *Solidus* meaning *a piece of money*. In other words, the Roman soldier was a hireling or mercenary, engaged with money to fight.

April Fool: The custom of April fooling originated in 1564, in France, which took the lead in shifting the New Year from what is now Lady Day (25th March) to January 1st. From the earliest periods of history, people bestowed gifts on their neighbours on New Years day. At that time people in France made mock visits to their friends on April 1st, with the object of fooling them that that date was still New Years Day.

Bakers Dozen: Thirteen instead of twelve. The extra one was the result of the imposition of a heavy penalty for underweight. To be on the safe side, the baker gave the retailer an extra loaf per dozen (called in-bread) to avoid all risks of incurring the fine.

Coger: We now refer to a person as *an old coger* meaning he is a nuisance or curmudgeon. But the word comes from the Latin *cogito* meaning *to think.* There was for many years a celebrated Cogers Club in Salisbury Court, London, all the members being well-known artistic or literary men.

Bowler Hat. The origin is best described by quoting a paragraph in the London *Daily News* of 8th August, 1868: *Mr Bowler, of 15 St Swithins Lane, has by a very simple contrivance, invented a hat which is completely ventilated, whilst at the same time the head is relieved of the pressure experienced in wearing hats of the ordinary description*.

Spinster: When the word is used properly as in Middle Dutch and Friesian language, a spinster was exactly what it spells - one who spins. The women of the Anglo-Saxon household span, in Winter, the fleeces which had been taken from the sheep during the Summer. It was a recognised axiom that no woman of that period was fitted to be a wife until she had spun for herself for her body, table and bed linen. Thus the task of spinning was generally delegated to the unmarried women of the house - the spinsters.

OK: A laconic slang term imported from the United States and meaning *it's all right.* It is usually said to have been used by Andrew Jackson, the seventh President, as an abbreviation for *All Correct*, which as the saying goes, he spelled *Orl Kerrect.* It is, the writer fears, a slander on the President.

7. Octogenerial Reflections: Part 3: 1965-1975

In this series of autobiographical essays, having reached an age at which I believe expressing one's genuine opinions is more important than being 'politically correct,' I continue enquiring into the *nature of the **I** which is the assumed source of all our deepest beliefs* (Part 2 in Issue 22). And reaching the *third stage* of my revised version of *Shakespeare's seven ages of man*, the ten years from age 25 to 35 turned out to be, what I can only describe as, a turbulent decade: one in which genial contentment was overcome by profound tragedy, with no forewarning.

Perhaps I need to emphasise that embarking on this enterprise was undertaken, not only to satisfy my curiosity relating to myself , but also to try to understand what makes people in general (or at least in indigenous western developed societies) reveal only rather anodyne accounts of their deeper personal convictions - or perhaps adopt 'a stiff upper lip.'

In part 2, my account concluded in a mood of optimism - happily married, parenthood, a PhD, living in Cambridge, with all that meant for my philosophical interests, and many bookshops to feed my bibliophilia. Our second son David was born there, and although cash-strapped we made do with what we could afford. (If, when in winter, wielding the starting handle of my 1949 Ford Anglia was ineffective, I used to drain the radiator and fill it from cans of freshly boiled water to start the engine!)

The AFRC Institute of Animal Physiology, Cambridge, was based at Babraham Hall, a former 'stately home,' that housed the institute's dining hall, library, director's flat and administrative offices. The laboratories and lecture theatres were accommodated in new buildings in the surrounding grounds, and probably uniquely for a scientific research establishment, the parish church lay within the grounds of the estate! I was appointed a member of the scientific staff there, and also gained a PhD for my research on the biochemistry of lactation.

But after about seven years, I began to question whether biochemical research was really my life's ambition. I wasn't bored with it, but my approach has always been to explore the 'big picture,' and fascinating as focussing on metabolic pathways was, it didn't seem enough. So I began looking for university lecturing opportunities at the recently-established universities, such as York, Warwick, Sussex, and Lancaster. Unfortunately, most having been set up in the mid 1960s, they were already fully stocked with projected lecturing staff, so that there were very few advertised posts in my area. But in 1968 I secured a lectureship in physiology at Nottingham University, in what was-then the Department of Physiology and Environmental Sciences and is now part of the School of Biosciences, on a campus which it shares with the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science.

With some regret, after all, leaving Cambridge was certainly a wrench, I took on my new roles with gusto - writing and delivering lectures, running practical classes and, with encouraging support from my professor, even holding seminars with final year students on *historica*l aspects of physiology.

In 1970, our daughter Sarah was born, completing our planned family. We bought a house in the small village of Wymeswold in Leicestershire, and became quite integrated into the social life of that close community. Ann, who had delivered three children in five years, was a consummate mother, and with frequent free holidays spent in the Dorset village where her parents had moved on retirement, it all seemed rather too idyllic to be true.

And so it was, for in early 1972, Ann was diagnosed with cancer of a very aggressive form, from which, later that year, she died at the Peel Street Women's Hospital in Nottingham. As a nurse, she knew exactly what was happening and the inevitable train of events, but she bore it all with courage and dignity. Fifty three years later, I still weep as I type this.

In her remaining ten months after the diagnosis, tantalising hopes sometimes arose, as when after an initial course of chemotherapy, her condition seemed miraculously improved. I clearly recall walking with her on a sunlit morning in the Arboretum, close to the hospital. She was radiant, cheerful and 'dressed up to the nines,' with the children in their innocence playing *hide-and-seek* among the trees; while I was deluded into thinking she could be on a path to recovery. But soon, with remorseless inevitability hopes were shredded. I suspect that in such circumstances, most people, whether 'signed up' to a religious belief or not, would resort to petitionary prayer. And they might do so, whether or not they believed it would be answered, arguing that it couldn't do any harm.

I had personally encountered such a dilemma at twenty one, when I had been diagnosed with a spinal tumour, which only after the operation had been performed proved to be a benign condition. But, based on my liberal religious beliefs (with reference to Unitarianism and Quakerism) described briefly in part 2 (issue 22) I considered that prayerful invocation of privilege should not be for personal benefit but rather a universal right. For if the consequences of tragedy are the result of random events, there's no reason why anyone should be any more protected from them than anyone else. Now, with Ann's more dire state, the same principle applied. This was not an outright denial of spiritual influences, as some might assume - but recognition that they might operate in fortifying human resolve rather than wishing away random misfortunes, however seemingly grave. Moreover, in the words of Alexander Pope; in '*An Essay on Man' (*1732): *Hope springs eternal in the human breast.*

Perhaps, two other provisos are called for. When I conceived of the idea of setting out this disquisition, I had no clear idea of how it would proceed: and, except in a rough and ready way, I don't have one now. That might seem negligent, but it has the merit of spontaneity, as I focus on the chronological development of my ideas, which I had not previously considered in that way. I also need to note that, respecting confidentiality, in this essentially personal analysis of my ideas, I intend to avoid all unnecessary comment on others (and sometimes obscure their identities).

This photo shows Ann and me at a partly-demolished cow barn in a Dorset village, during the conversion of the farm house to a retirement home for her parents. With the children, we often had holidays there.

In the immediate aftermath of Ann's death, I had to discover a whole new *modus vivendi* - as I had suddenly become a single parent of three children, all under seven years of age, having previously relied on her devoted care, which, far from being a burden, she had relished without reservation. Offers of help came from several sources, but for most, while expressing gratitude, I insisted that I could manage on my own, a reflection of my characteristically independent streak: some would call it 'stubborn.'

When Ann died, I imagined that either of two scenarios was possible. I could have crumbled under the weight of new responsibilities or resolved to cope with them. Fortunately, I had the strength and determination to follow the latter, a tenacious attitude of self-reliance being a *sine qua non*. People often asked me how I coped with my responsibilities for the children - to which I replied that they were not a problem, but the solution, as Ann lived on through them.

Within the three later years of this period, up to 1975, there was little time for philosophy or, more widely, reading, as I was usually engulfed in domestic chores and taking the children to weekend sports activities, or meeting with friends or my siblings' families. But at evening meal times (which I understand are now rarely a feature of families' communal activity) I often engaged the children in suitably-tailored 'debates' on political and philosophical themes - surely, a rather precocious activity at their tender ages, but which I believe influenced their subsequent worldviews.

But when they were all in bed, I usually had some time to read, think, listen to music and sometimes write reflections or poetry. Over a two year period, I also hired a baby-sitter (some were my postgraduate students), to allow me to attend courses on the philosophy of politics and science (20 sessions in both) run by the Adult Education department of the University, which were later to have a significant impact on the courses I ran on bioethics in my own department.

The rationale for this disquisition is to examine the impact of experiences and beliefs in my considered convictions as to the nature of ***I*****,** as summarised in the introductory paragraph. Unsurprisingly, developments in this quest were quite limited. At the time, my work, which encompassed lecturing and research together with almost full-time care of the children, were the foremost priorities. But, subliminally, I must have been turning over, and making notes of, ideas concerning my central ***I*** question, which were often only appreciated in retrospect.

The next instalment will reveal more reflections on the way contingent, often unanticipated, events shaped my beliefs. I am encouraged to continue the account by feedback from several readers.

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