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Adventures in Librarianship: "This Space Under Construction"

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Did You Know? — Movable Books

by **Eleanor M. Heldrich** (Prospect Hill Press, 216 Wendover Rd., Baltimore, MD 21218)

Movable is the name that has been given to books that are interactive; that is, it takes an action by the reader to produce movement on the pages. Most of us, however, just call them pop-up books.

The first movable books were not intended for children. They offered special effects to help illustrate a point. One of the most famous, and very rare in its first edition, features an explanation of Euclidian mathematics. Another rare and wonderful example is by Humphry Repton, the famous English landscape architect, who created a book of garden designs with overlays to show the changes that would be made by new plantings. Veterinarians and surgeons also developed books with successive overlays to show the position of bones, the circulatory system, and organs in animals and human beings. Fashion magazines used plates with ovals cut out where a face would be to show different outfits for the modish lady on the final page whose face appeared above all the dresses.

In the 1860's in England, Dean and Company began to mass produce movable books for children with transformations — where one picture is seen to disappear and another take its place by pulling on a ribbon — and figures that rose from paper surface in layers when the page was opened. Another English printer Raphael Tuck produced a "Mechanical series," also with stand-up pictures. Most of these books were printed in Germany because the German printers were more advanced at printing in colors. And it was a German artist, Lothar Meggendorfer, who introduced in the 1880's pictures with complicated between-the-pages mechanics activated by a pull tab such as one that allowed a fiddler to draw a bow across a violin while keeping time with a tapping foot. Ernest Nister is another German printer who produced quality books in many fields but is known primarily for his movable books for children depicting idealized Victorian themes. McLoughlin Brothers of New York began producing movable books in the 1880's, but by and large movable books disappeared from the market after the end of the century.

In 1929 a British publisher S.L. Giraud began a Bookano series of large collections of stories with five to seven "living models" inserted between the pages. These are brilliantly-colored figures that stand up straight from the page and can be viewed from all sides. But it fell to an American publisher, Blue Ribbon, to first use the designation "pop-up" for a group of books they developed for children in conjunction with Walt Disney in the 1930's.

An artist named Julian Wehr began illustrating a series of already famous stories with pull-tabs that caused multiple movements on the page. These books are extraordinary in that they are printed on regular paper rather than

the usual light cardboard. Jolly Jump-ups became a popular series in the 1930's and 1940's, but not much new happened in movables until the 1960's.

Enter a remarkable man named Voiteck Kubasta in Czechoslovakia. Working behind the Iron Curtain, he produced more than sixty titles — fairy tales, original stories, series tales — on cheap paper with poor printing, but of great popularity. Several titles were printed in England and admired by an American graphic artist named Waldo Hunt who tried to gain permission without success to reproduce them here. He decided to try to produce successful pop-ups in the USA with local talent. Starting in a small way by persuading advertisers to try pop-ups in their ads, he then worked with Hallmark to produce a long and successful string of books. Then came a numbered series of Pop-Ups for Random House, running to fifty. The movable book craze was on its way! Mr. Hunt says the thing he looks for in any pop-up book is the "wow" factor.

Today hundreds of new movable books appear each year produced by many and varied publishers. They range in size from miniature to folio, and from simple flap books to amazing action. A famous one among collectors is *The Earth in Three Dimensions* published by Dial in 1994 that has a single pop-up — a 12" model of the earth springs up from

the page when the cover is opened, unfurls to become perfectly round, and begins rotating on a string! The paper engineer for this production was David Hawcock.

Most modern pop-ups are created by a team of people. First comes the concept, fleshed out by an artist with suggestions for some kind of action, then to the publisher to determine the sales potential and to set a budget on production. If the idea gets a preliminary go-ahead, a paper engineer perfects the movable actions, then sketches the required parts on paper, often having to fit them together on the paper layout like jigsaw

puzzle pieces. A mock-up of the book showing the action is put together. If everything is still go and the project can be completed within budget, the sheets sketched for the mechanics are sent to the artist to be painted to match the art on the rest of the pages. The book is then printed. Cutting, assembling and

gluing the pieces into the pages of a book is labor intensive and is done, usually by young women, in either South America or the Far East.

All movable books are works of wonder and delight but when a movable book combines a story, art, movement, scale, color and balance with elegance and flair, it becomes a treasure!

Adventures in Librarianship — "This Space Under Construction"

by **Ned Kraft** (Smithsonian Institution Libraries)
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The letter said, "Please send anything you have touching Nematodes or related category." Well. Nematodes. Hmm. Now is that vegetable or mineral?

The letter came from a Gift & Exchange librarian in the Baltic trying to build her sadly underfunded collection. I imagined her in ruined, cramped quarters, a museum library just trying to get back on its feet after decades of neglect, begging help from "rich," Western institutions. All right, I thought, I've got some exchange resources.

Let's see if I can send her a box of something. First off, what are Nematodes?

Just as I dug in for a round of research, the jackhammer started. "Ah-Ah-Ah-Ah" beyond my wall but feeling as though my skull was its real target. I work in an old building, the National Museum of Natural History, circa 1910. For years, it seems, the renovation hasn't paused, from major new additions to fancy new interior space. I sometimes expect to see the library staff with hammers hanging from their belt loops.

Last Spring the nearest (and therefore

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dearest) men's room became a women's room while the women's room got fresh makeup. Okay, a few close calls with humiliation, but I adjusted to using the men's further back by the boiler room. In October, they closed that hallway to excavate a new public cafeteria. Hmm. This was a challenge. Third floor! When they closed the elevator for "maintenance," I realized that a larger, more diabolical intellect than mine was at work. A mouse in a maze? Maybe. This is a science museum, after all.

Then we have the water problems. As lines are turned on and off, some rerouted, some forgotten, the drinking fountains get testy with frustration. They lure you close with a limp dribble then cough in your face. All the while, in the furthest wings, mysterious springs slowly drip onto acoustical tiles, painting brownish clouds, causing entomology librarians to drape their shelves in plastic sheets. God save our bug books.

We have pairs of workmen hiking through with long beams stretched between them, negotiating corners with all the grace of an eighteen-wheeler flagging its way through tourist traffic. We have scheduled power outages bringing our LAN down early, forcing technical services folk to twiddle their thumbs. We have sections of office space closed down entirely, the former occupants doubling up with others, sitting on laps where necessary.

And yet, with all this interior hoopla, most of the place, mysteriously, remains unchanged.

The centerpiece of the National Museum of Natural History, in its cavernous "rotunda" gallery, is a stuffed bull elephant, famously de-sexed in deference to early 1950's sensibilities. You'd think that the brave new world of blunt correctness would have forced the amputated elephant into the dust bin years ago. But, no. There he stands. I have several aunts probably young enough to have seen the same beast on their eighth-grade trips (if they had eighth-grade trips back then) and not have been agitated by any hint of elephant plumbing.

The anthropological exhibits also date back to that enlightened era and now have the same kitsch value as Fiestaware and Hummel figurines. In stage-set dioramas brownish mannequins of primitive people (all faintly occidental) enact their prehistoric lives: hunting, gathering, weaving, sometimes bullying each other the way only mannequins can. The mammals hall, they say, is haunted by the great hunter himself: T.R.

But the beauty of any old building comes partly from its dust, from knowing that one's forebears could have walked the same halls. It comes from the personal honor of having thick marble underfoot, the grand and high interior vistas, the echo, the purpose. And the beauty of my old building in particular comes from imagining that one or two out of every hundred eighth-graders might sense the very same grandeur, maybe for the first time. Maybe one or two might actually learn some-

thing from an exhibit to which my work contributed in some tiny way.

Nematode. I found it. Worms. The librarian who I imagined in the middle of decay needs books on worms. There's a gap in her shelves where the worm books should be. Oddly enough, I had a few things I could send that might help. The Balkan librarian was mending her old building — its enterprise, at least just as all librarians strain to keep up, fix the holes, plug the leaks, stay one step ahead wherever possible.

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a map of the London/Winchester-Canterbury pilgrim routes with places of interest linked to pop-up text and images. Most of the graphics are rather small: the largest only use a quarter of the screen. There's no ability to enlarge them either. This is particularly annoying for the medieval maps which are too small to identify any details.

Opening the desk drawer also opens cupboards on either side of the desk. These cupboards contain notebooks labeled Further Reading, seventeen Critical Essays, and Glossary. Further Reading contains entries for bibliographies, general information about Chaucer and his works, readings about the *Canterbury Tales* and Chaucer's other works or on specific subjects. These subjects include topics such as astrology, the kings of the period, the language of the period, and the role and meaning of pilgrimage in medieval society.

When reading the medieval texts, words and phrases that appear in different type face have automatic links to the glossary. When the cursor moves over these words and phrases, it changes to a magnifying glass. Clicking will open a window with the explanation. Users can customize the color of the text for both the pop-up windows and for the links that jump to related texts.

But before I could type a shipping label, I was asked to move away from my desk by a set of very serious, hard-hatted men. They tapped, prodded, and measured my wall. I didn't know why. I chalked it up to another of the mysteries of old buildings, the Gaia of old buildings. They change and grow, expand and contract, crack and mend with us as their many generations of servants.

I am thinking about buying my own hard hat.

Chaucer: Life & Times also includes several thematic routes (rolodex icon) through the various components of this disc (Middle English texts, translations, critical essays, overviews, and life and times). These themes cover: authority, marriage, chivalry/courtly love, language, dreams, and religion. Students and teachers can also create their own thematic tours for personal or classroom use.

The ondisc documentation and the accompanying user's guide provide more than adequate help. The guide even has a section for teaching applications and suggested assignments.

Chaucer: Life & Times is a rich source for study materials on Chaucer and his works. Having a single source that groups the Middle English texts with their translations and links to a glossary offers great benefits to students. The Riverside edition, using the text edited by F. N. Robinson, is a standard text used in many schools. However, the textual notes and explanatory notes found in some printed editions do not appear on the disc. Nor is there any discussion of the variant editions of the manuscripts and how they compare — but that is more a scholar's concern than that of a student. The recordings of some of the passages provide an aural appreciation of the Middle English poetry and a deeper understanding of the relation of the written text and its pronunciation and how it relates to modern English.

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