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being charged on multiple item lots that make over the €1000.

And, of course, the law which came into force stated that the seller was the liable party for the ARR. This somehow ended up being quietly transferred to the buyer and was never challenged.

Martin Steenson

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Auction Reports *Books and works on paper*

Thar she blows for auction record

Herman Melville whaling classic was a failure when first published in both the UK and US

by Ian McKay

Published in 1851 by Richard Bentley as The Whale, the first English edition of Herman Melville's tale preceded the American issue by four weeks.

There were numerous differences in the text – some quite slight, but others that impacted in substantial and unintended ways.

English reviewers were puzzled by the fact that the tale was presented as narrated by Ishmael, even though he mentions when Captain Ahab's whaler, Pequod, is lost. That mystery seems to have resulted from the fact that the Epilogue in which his survival is revealed appears to have been cut or mutilated by the English printers.

Other changes however, some of them sensible, resulted from censorship. Many hundreds of words attributing human failures to God, or comparing human shortcomings with divine ones, were revised or removed entirely. Sexual matters, including the reproductive habits of whales, were considered too raw about the mission of Harpooner Queequeg's cannibal tribe, also cut.

Remarks "indicating royalty or suggesting a criticism of the British" brought about the excision of the whole of Chapter 25, which discussed the use of spears at a coronation, while passworad grammatical or even stylistic anomalies were handled with what has been described as "a highly conservative interpretation" of rules of "correctness".

The book was a failure in both the US, where it was published as *Moby Dick, or The Whale*, but in today a classic. The three-decker first edition contemporary half-calf (illustrated) boards offered in an online sale at Sotheby's New York (25/28/13.9.9) **buyer's premium**) from June 7-12 produced an auction record for the work at $315,000 (£86,625).

Above left: The three-decker, 1851 first of Herman Melville's The Whale, sold for a record **$315,000 (£86,625)** by Sotheby's New York.

Above right: a whale launches a harpooner into the air as it smashes into a boat in this wood-engraved plate from a very rare copy of the ...Narrative of Capt. William Scoresby sold in New York for **$2500 (£1750)**.

Essex inspiration

A separate whaling section in the US sale included an 1831 first in original boards of Owen Chase's Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Whale-Ship Essex – the inspiration for both Melville's book and Edgar Allan Poe's Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket that sold for $8000 (£5600).

Sold at $3000 (£2910) was an 1843 copy in original wrappers of *The Life of Samuel Comstock*, ... the story of a young Quaker harpooner who in 1824 had instigated a bloody mutiny on the whaler Globe and, following the slaughter of its officers, attempted to set up his own island nation in the South Pacific.

A copy of Moby Dick (£1750) sent an 1849, Cincinnati first of The Essex: Narrative of Capt. William Lindsell, ... whose scrapping adventures included accounts of engagements with pirates and whaling expeditions, one of them with the mountainous whaler and victor on the Arctic region, William Scoresby. The tale also features Scoresby, in the last of which Stockell was the sole survivor.

Melville purchases

In Melville's bicentennial year, Swann Galleries of New York will on October 10 offer two heavily annotated volumes of works by Euripides, Juvenal and Persius from his library. Estimated at $40,000-60,000 they are the only known signatures from a 27-volume, Harper Bros edition of the classics he purchased in 1860 as Sound the Moore whale making the long passage from New York to San Francisco, via Cape Horn.

Do you recognise this castle seal?

MADAM – A silver seal matrix, probably George III period, has recently been added to the Matrix Collection.

It depicts a medieval-looking fortified building, possibly a castle keep or a public institution such as a prison (see **left**). So far the building has not been identified but perhaps one of your readers might provide recognition?

It is a most unusual seal and its purpose is far from obvious.

David Morris FSA
Romsey, Hampshire

nt to us by our readers both via email and more traditional methods.
ndence to our inbox than we could ever reply to and consequently
very piece of correspondence we receive.
hat we receive and we cannot enter into correspondence on our
are chosen for publication and which are not.
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The ATG roos of the world

Our *ATG* reporters travel far and wide to bring you the best coverage of art and antiques... pictured here is *Dealers' Diary* writer Frances Allitt in Brisbane, Australia.

When she had finished explaining to her new Antipodean chum how a Doulton Lambeth pottery bear was found in the undergrowth of a Kent garden, Frances headed off to the Australian Antique and Art Dealers Association fair (the *AAADA Antiques & Art Fair Sydney*). A report will appear in a forthcoming issue.

She took this view of the fair on opening day shown **right**.

Man at work

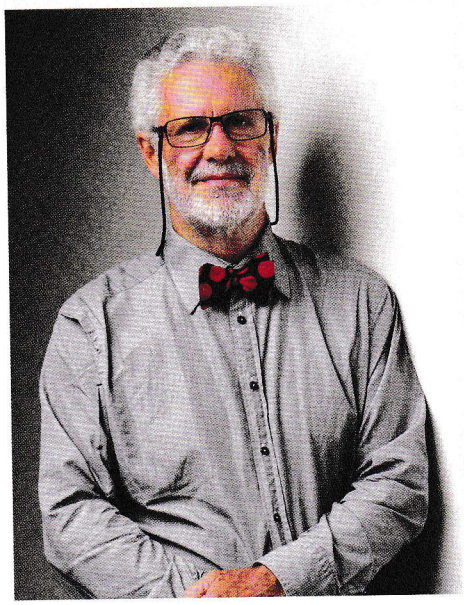
Staying with Down Under, in this edition silver consultant, historian and valuer Jolyon Warwick James, based in Sydney, writes on Australian hallmarking as part of our silver feature – see p18.

Jolyon (pictured **below**) is also a volunteer broadcaster on 2RPH, a community radio station in New South Wales for listeners who are blind or have low vision or are unable to access published material for any reason.

Its service features readings from newspapers, international and Australian magazines, and books.

Jolyon hosts the *Antiques Radio Show* in which he reads out top stories from a small number of art and antiques publications one of which, we are proud to say, is *ATG*.

His monthly show is aired every other Monday at 5.30pm Sydney time (every second programme is thus a repeat), usually appearing on the second and fourth Mondays of each month.



Sydney is currently nine hours ahead of the UK, so British readers who fancy tuning in should be ready at 8.30am and point their web browser to www.2rph.org.au/listen/how-to-listen.

Note that during the UK Winter Time, Sydney is 11 hours ahead.

And, of course, there is a short period after Australian Summer Time begins, usually the first week in October, and before UK Winter Time starts, usually the last week in October, when neither of the above applies and the difference is 10 hours.