



The National Sporting Library NEWSLETTER

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Going to a Fight!

By Robert K. Weber

London-based film director Robert Coldstream was running out of options. His research for a television documentary on bare-knuckled boxing in Georgian England had led him to a print executed in 1819. But his search for a usable copy at the most prestigious institutions in Britain – The Tate Gallery, The British Museum, and The British Library – had proven unsuccessful.

So Coldstream turned to the Internet where he discovered the National Sporting Library. To his surprise and delight, the NSL possesses an immaculate and reproducible copy of the item in question: I. R. Cruickshank's etching *Picture of the Fancy Going to a Fight at Mousley Hurst*.

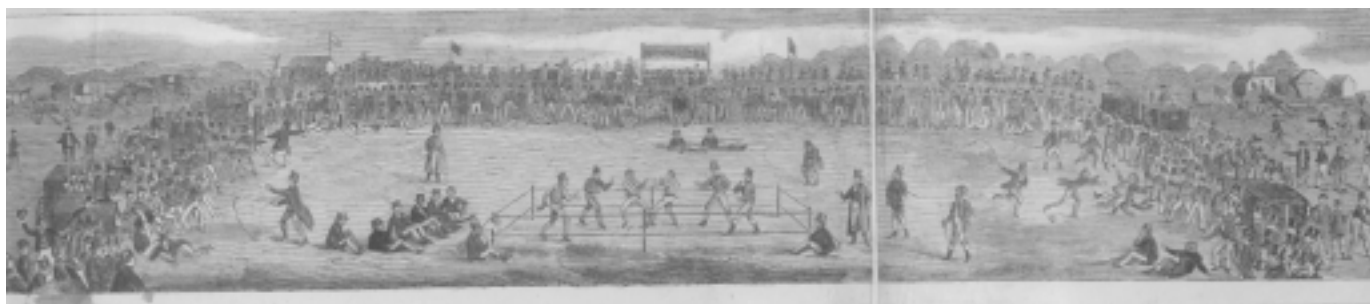
"How ironic," remarked Coldstream. "I've spent weeks searching to no avail for these

images here in London where they were first produced, and they turn up on the other side of the Atlantic."

A 14-foot long panorama, *Going to a Fight*, is one of the true gems in the Library's collection and is just the sort of illustrative material Coldstream needed. It accurately depicts a social and sporting phenomenon of Georgian England, bare-knuckled boxing.

Boxing, an ancient sport, found

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The Real Charlotte Found After Thirty Years

By Lisa Campbell

After sporting book collector John H. Daniels read a description of *The Real Charlotte* in *A Bibliography of E. C. Somerville & Martin Ross* by Elizabeth Hudson, he added the three-volume novel to his desiderata list. Thirty years went by before he scored a hit.

This rare edition, published by Ward and Downey, Ltd. (London, 1894) was the third novel by the famous Irish cousins and was by far the most popular.

Daniels, an NSL director, had sent his list to many rare book dealers in a relentless search. In *Affectionately H* (1999) he includes his 1978 letter to bookseller Helen Hennessey of Vermont to keep a sharp eye out for the first edition.

Then in December 2002, rare book dealer James Cummins of New York finally spotted it in a Sotheby's catalog for a London auction. "It was the triple decker, the rarest of the Somerville and Ross books. It had

not been available anywhere for years," said Cummins, also an NSL director.

"I had forgotten about it," said Daniels. "But Jim has the kind of mentality to remember that sort of thing. He got fired up when he saw it in the catalog."

Cummins was the successful bidder for the book, much to Daniels's delight. And soon after receiving the rare prize, Daniels donated it to the NSL.

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Going to a Fight!

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fertile ground in England becoming an immensely popular pastime for gamblers and spectators alike by the mid-18th century. English champions like Figg, Broughton, Gully, and Cribb were revered as national heroes. So popular was the sport that publications such as *The Sporting Magazine* covered matches blow-by-blow and reported vividly on the atmosphere surrounding each fight.

Two factors combined to create that rather remarkable and historically significant atmosphere. The glory days of boxing in Georgian England, the late 18th and early 19th century, were a period of social unrest and violence. The American and French Revolutions, with their cries of equality, threatened the aristocratic class and made the poor and disenfranchised begin to question their lots in life. Boxing brought these conflicting classes together and mixed them in a way unheard of in other social arenas. If only momentarily, rich and poor shared a common interest. In fact, pugilistic success was one of the few means by which the underprivileged might achieve fame and fortune.

Second, boxing matches were illegal. Although fights attracted crowds as large as 20,000 people, the location of a match remained secret until the morning of the fight. *The Sporting Magazine* of May 1819 reports: "The Fancy were all upon the alert soon after breakfast...to ascertain the seat of action, and, as soon as the important whisper had gone forth...the toddlers were off in a twinkling."

The "Fancy" – frequent fight-goers – made a grand procession to the site of the action – often several miles outside of town – traveling in all manner of vehicle, on horseback, or on foot. Sometimes local magistrates learned of a planned

match, which forced a last-minute change of venue.

Cruikshank faithfully captures this atmosphere in splendid color in *Going to a Fight*. A charming piece of ephemera, its true value is only realized when paired with the key describing each scene, which was published as a companion to the etching. Together, panorama and key provide a rare and insightful visual record of an important aspect of Georgian English society. Indeed, *The Sporting Magazine* of December 1819 says of *Going to a Fight*: "We find real life, originality of character, and the peculiar traits of a certain class in society of the present day, from the nobleman to the match-boy, so masterly portrayed...that it might be urged, it is without a competitor."

Boxing promoter Pierce Egan commissioned Cruikshank to design *Going to a Fight*, one of the earliest panoramas produced. Panoramas depicting sporting events were fashionable in England during the early 19th century and were often rented for a short period to provide entertainment at home. Their popularity continues today among bibliophiles and antiquarians.

The Library's copy is one of several of its kind in the Daniels Collection, donated in 1995. John Daniels, a learned and once-avid book collector, recalls how he discovered sporting panoramas: "I had no idea they existed," he says. "I stumbled across the first one and went bananas! I was charmed, and once I knew of their existence, I sought them out eagerly."

He acquired the panorama from bookseller Helen Hennessey, but didn't learn of the accompanying key until a few years later. "I was bowled over by the key. It was a research breakthrough; it completes the story told by the panorama."

Daniels is immensely proud of his panoramas. He remembers how visitors to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts received them during an exhibition of his collection there in 1992: "I would sneak in to watch people and their reactions," he says. "The panoramas grabbed them."

Just as it was in 1819, *Going to a Fight* remains a "curiosity of literature" to be enjoyed for its novelty and beauty, but also to be studied as a rare glimpse of the sporting world of long ago.

Rare Tapes to NSL

Author Mike Helm has donated to the National Sporting Library the original taped interviews for his classic book *Bred to Run: The Making of a Thoroughbred* (1993).

The tapes include lengthy interviews with Arthur Hancock of Stone Farm, Seth Hancock of Claiborne Farm and legendary Kentucky veterinarian Walter (Doc) Kaufman.

On one tape, Arthur recounts the sometimes heated debates between himself and his father, Bull Hancock, over the merits of in-breeding Thoroughbreds versus out-crossing. The elder Hancock was a strong advocate of the hybrid vigor which he believed resulted from out-crossing.

Helm also donated tapes used in the writing of *A Breed Apart: The Horses and The Players* (1991), an account of life on and around Bay Area racetracks.

Helm is publisher of City Miner Books in Berkeley, California.

The Real Charlotte

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The Real Charlotte ties in magnificently with the Library's complete Somerville and Ross collection. The NSL's Daniels Collection of 5,000 sporting books consists of all works published by the Irish duo plus five autograph manuscripts and original drawings by Somerville for *In the Vine Country* (1893).

In 1889, Edith Somerville (1858-1949) and (Violet) Martin Ross (1862-1915) published their first book, *An Irish Cousin*. Like most of their novels, the stories were based on their own lives.

They lived during an era of the decline of the "country gentleman" – men who spent their day-to-day lives hunting, fishing and shooting. Women were often home alone because husbands, fathers and brothers were elsewhere serving the government or military at some British Empire outpost or otherwise trying to make a living to keep the family estate running.

The Real Charlotte is Edith's two-fold revenge against her older cousin, Emily Herbert. Gifford writes: "Their most memorable character, Charlotte Mullen, was based on a cousin...who by cheating Edith of an inheritance gave her the impetus to make a career for herself. What irony lies in Edith's dreadful revenge of her casting Emily as the dark centre of their best novel."

The Real Charlotte presents the Irish scene brimming with human emotions and frailty, and the love of sport. Among the unforgettable characters are Charlotte Mullen, a 40-year-old spinster, and her pretty 19-year-old cousin Francie who comes to live with her. Charlotte plots to steal Francie's inheritance and then uses the money in an attempt to rise in Irish society.

For most young women, the only option was marriage. But neither



Edith Somerville (left) and Martin Ross, authors of *The Real Charlotte*.

Somerville nor Ross married, and the publication of their books enabled the cousins to earn a bit of money for themselves.

They didn't live together until 1906, when Ross left her home hundreds of miles away to live with Edith. For 20 previous years, all of their ideas, development of stories and final drafts were conducted by mail.

Somerville's active life lent fascinating details. She attended art schools in London and Paris. She loved foxhunting and formed her own hunt, the West Carbery, and served as master.

Ross loved foxhunting too, but was the more scholarly of the pair. She was an avid reader and was credited with the careful fine-tuning of the prose which inevitably presented savory reading.

Their combined talents captured the lives and the language of the Irish. Gifford Lewis writes in *The Selected Letters of Somerville and Ross* (1989): "Somerville and Ross excelled in the dramatic use of recorded speech of all classes of Ireland... *The Real Charlotte* is the best Irish novel of the 19th century and the best set of comic tales of Irish life in the last days of the Ascendancy."

Their marvelous choice of words color vivid images in the reader's mind, appealing to all the senses. Thus, *The Real Charlotte* was

published without illustrations. In Volume II of the triple-decker, they write: "There was no sound in the gloom except the steady trickle of running water and the anxious breathing of the photographer. Christopher's long hands moved mysteriously in the crimson light among phials, baths and cases of negatives, while uncanny smells of various acids and compounds thicken the atmosphere."

Daniels points out that after Ross's death in 1915, Edith continued to use her cousin's name as co-author. She had worked so closely with Ross's way of thinking and story development that she felt she still communicated with her spirit.

Daniels notes that Somerville traveled to South Carolina in 1926 to foxhunt with Mrs. Thomas Hitchcock, MFH of the Aiken Hunt. Subsequently, the Hitchcocks contacted their friend Eugene Connett of The Derrydale Press to publish a special Hitchcock edition of Somerville and Ross books which was published in 1927. With a press run of only 500, these books are bound in green cloth with gilt emblems on the spine.

Daniels also donated to the NSL a painting by Somerville of an Irish trout stream. This oil on canvas once hung in Connett's New York office and now hangs in the NSL.

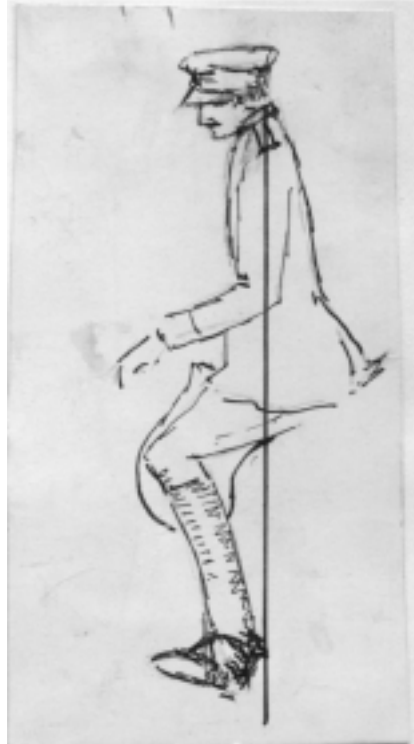
Somerville wrote amusing and insightful comments about the authoring of each book described in Hudson's 1942 bibliography. The specialty of collecting rare books did not interest Somerville very much. She valued the written word as opposed to the physical value. She is inscribed in Hudson's bibliography a tongue-in-cheek note: "You have taught me kindly, yet piteously, how insignificant are the words of an Author as compared with the quality of the paper on which they are printed."

Collection of Piero Santini Papers

Students of horsemanship and its history now have access to a remarkable assortment of material in the manuscript collection of the National Sporting Library.

Part of the Lida Fleitmann Bloodgood Collection, these papers relate directly to Major Piero Santini (1881-1960), one of the most influential figures in the history of horsemanship. Santini, an Italian cavalry officer, spent thirty years instructing the equestrian world on the benefits of the forward seat. This riding style was developed circa 1904 by his teacher, Capt. Federico Caprilli (1868-1907) and is the basis of modern horsemanship.

Donated by Bloodgood to the Library in 1978, the Santini papers were recently organized in such a manner as to allow easy access for researchers, as well as to ensure their



Sketch by Piero Santini.

preservation for years to come. The collection consists of twelve folders of correspondence, articles, typescripts, and photos, as well as two scrapbooks. The letters are Santini's personal correspondence, much of it between him and equestrians around the world. Santini's letters sought advice on topics such as the fit of a saddle or a problem horse. Copies of his usually prompt and thorough responses are included. Also among the documents are copies and typescripts of numerous articles that Santini wrote on equitation and other equestrian pursuits.

Anyone interested in the development of modern horsemanship, or the life of Piero Santini, will find this collection an invaluable resource.

Irving Abb Volunteer of the Year

The Library has named Irving Abb as the 2002 National Sporting Library Volunteer of the Year for his perseverance wading through and documenting the voluminous Harry Worcester Smith archives.

"Alexander Mackay-Smith's bibliography in *The American Foxhound* (1968) lists the autobiography of Harry Worcester Smith in transcript, now in the possession of the National Sporting Library," writes Abb in the Spring 2001 *National Sporting Library Newsletter*. "Having been much intrigued by what little I know of the *enfant terrible* of foxhunting, I called the Library and asked to see the document. To shorten the narrative, I came, I looked,



Librarian Robert Weber presents Irving Abb with Volunteer of the Year certificate.

and am still looking."

Smith (1865-1945) was a renowned and somewhat controversial master of foxhounds, amateur steeplechase rider and sporting author. Abb, a retired lawyer and ex-MFH of Big Meadow Hounds (Md.), spends a few hours each week at the NSL examining Smith's collection of letters, news clippings and photos. He began his search through the archives shortly after the new Library building opened in 1999. The Smith papers fill 15 large boxes, therefore nearly four years later he still arrives from Frederick, Maryland on

Tuesdays. By now, he is likely the best authority on Smith.



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Smith Donates California Art Books

Joan Irvine Smith, an JNSL director, donated eleven beautiful books published by the Irvine Museum which she founded in 1992. Each volume presents a number of paintings exhibited in the museum. The collection is dedicated to displaying art of the California Impressionist Period (1890-1930).



Vaqueros Roping a Steer by Charles Christian Nahl
from *California: This Golden Land of Promise*.

Some paintings in the books depict the history of the West Coast. *California: The Golden Land of Promise* (2001) tells the early history of the state with a well-written text and many historical

photographs and images of Native Americans, vaqueros, ranchers, Mexicans, beautiful missions and landscapes before cities were built.

2003 Duplicate Book Sale Summary

Total proceeds from sale:
Total number of bidders: 45
Highest single bid on print:
Highest single bid: amount and book



Library patrons Magalen O. Bryant (left) and Eve Fout were among the Chairman's Council members who gathered in the Founders' Room for the Breeder's Cup last fall.



Sam Huff Honored

Acting Director Rebecca Tomlinson presented pro-football Hall of Famer Sam Huff with a distinguished service award for his support of the NSL at a recent meeting of the Board of Directors. A Middleburg Thoroughbred owner and breeder, Huff was one of the first members of the Chairman's Council.



Kate Shipley, Ontario, Meggie Elledge, Washington, and Melinda Sadler, Missouri, participated in the International Pony Club 2002 Foxhunting Exchange and visited the NSL in October.

Book Reviews



***A Breed Apart: The Art Collections of the American Kennel Club and the American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog* by William Secord. Wappinger's Falls, NY: Antique Collector's Club. 2001. 325pp. Illustrations. Index. \$68.00.**

William Secord has chosen to deal with "the most comprehensive collection of canine art in the world" from a historical art perspective in *A Breed Apart*. The reader is rewarded by the depth of his research on the social forces influencing the development and importance of the dog as a primary subject matter in fine art. The 17 pages of artists' biographies on their own suggest this study.

Some 400 color plates are lavished throughout in this handsome, scholarly book, and they are not only paintings. We are treated to porcelain dogs and inkwells, French bonzes, 19th-century dog collars, and silver tankards and trophies interspersed among Northern European, French, English and American paintings. The reader will find favorites which speak to his or her visual sensibilities, and nuggets of fresh information, for the scope of Secord's research is impressive.

Sir Edwin Landseer (1802-1873) brought an understanding of dog anatomy and behavior to his art, brilliantly painting dogs in landscapes and human situations. The animal painter to Queen Victoria made his first contribution to the Royal Academy at the age of 13. Secord writes extensively about Landseer's artistic life and style. The artist was closely associated with the royal family and the Scottish Highlands, first traveling to Scotland to visit Sir Walter Scott. Plates 64 and 65 are fine examples of Landseer's anthropomorphic dog paintings, and are only two of a number of splendid Landseer paintings in the book.

The collection of seven George Earl (1824-1905) plates is superb. Although he also produced purebred dog portraits, Earl was closely associated with field trial sports, and the two collections are fortunate to be able to represent this genre so well. In this same chapter on Landseer and 19th-century English dog painting, the browser should not miss looking at Plate 104 "Lady with a Whippet" by F. R. deLeub and Plate 125 "A Domestic Scene, 1888" by William Hamilton Troud. Read Secord's accompanying text which describes the royal kennels at Windsor Castle and Queen Victoria's influence on and appreciation of dog paintings.

There is a wealth of fine art reproduced in wonderful color in this book with many lovely sporting dog scenes by artists such as Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait, Edmund

Henry Osthau, Alexander Pope, and a rare canine painting by American Impressionist J. Alden Weir, "Words of Comfort, 1887," so realistically depicting a tender relationship between two dogs.

Secord included a number of plates of fine sporting dogs. Foxhounds, staghounds, beagles, bassets and bird dogs are beautifully displayed. Artist Jean Bowman (1917-1994), a Middleburg resident for 50 years, is represented by a lovely painting of Fox Terriers belonging to Mrs. William W. Brainard Jr.

—Deborah Pritchard



***The Wild Host: The History and Meaning of the Hunt* by Rupert Isaacson. (Lanham, Md. & New York: The Derrydale Press, 2002). 280pp., illus., biblio., glossary, index. \$47.50.**

Anyone who has ever ridden to hounds or is an ardent opponent of the sport will want to read Rupert Isaacson's *The Wild Host: The History and Meaning of the Hunt*. Not only is this book an enlightening and entertaining exploration of the history of hunting with hounds, but it is also an honest, insightful, and relevant examination of the morality of hunting, the motives for hunting, and the place of hunting in the modern world. Whether or not one agrees with all of Isaacson's views, interpretations, or the way in which he presents them, one cannot read *Wild Host* without gaining a broader and deeper understanding of hunting, its supporters, and its detractors.

A frequent foxhunter himself, Isaacson wrestles with the ambiguities concerning the morality of hunting: "Despite my life-long defence of hunting...I am becoming less and less comfortable with the idea of hunting for sport at all...Am I in fact defending something, doing something, that is indefensible?" This uncertainty colors Isaacson's writing. While the bulk of the book is an impressively comprehensive study of the history and evolution of hunting in various cultures around the world (complemented by beautiful color photographs), Isaacson's primary contribution is his honest attempt to answer this question.

Isaacson engages the reader in a frank discussion, providing an objective and sympathetic look at the arguments against foxhunting, while providing just as many arguments in its defense. His internal conflict is at times frustrating. The reader finds himself wishing that Isaacson would pick a position and defend it. Yet this is not his purpose in writing: "It's the big grey area in between [the] moral 'wrongs' that concerns me, and that,

Wallace Nall Retrospective

In November, the National Sporting Library opened a two-week exhibit honoring popular sporting artist Wallace Nall of Middleburg. His portraits of people and favorite horses and dogs grace many homes in the Piedmont.

"W. Nall, A Retrospective," was the initiative of Nicole Hawes Perry, an NSL Chairman's Council member and close friend of Nall.

His many friends in the area generously loaned portraits and paintings of beloved hunters, racehorses and dogs. NSL Curator Walta Warren arranged the 27 works in the NSL's Forrest E. Mars Sr. Exhibit Hall.

"When Nicky Perry and Margaret Littleton first posed the idea of an exhibition of Wally Nall's work, none of us had any idea of the overwhelming response that such an exhibit would generate," said Warren. "Within a few weeks, well over 100 paintings from private collections had been offered for hanging. Unfortunately, we were forced to narrow that number drastically due to the amount of available hanging space which we had at the time of the exhibit.

"It was difficult to turn away so many paintings of such beloved and honored animals painted with Wally Nall's very particular eye for detail



First Whip (1997), owned by Leffert Lefferts, an oil on canvas by Wallace Nall of Jim Boyle of Piedmont Fox Hounds.

in execution. Visitors repeatedly commented on having known a particular horse and how precisely Mr. Nall had captured the essence of the personality of the animal, as well as of the rider," she said.

"I think he is a wonderful person and deserves credit for all the work he has done," said Perry. "I hunted with Piedmont Hunt, and Wally followed the hounds. He's always at the Upperville Horse Show. When visiting homes of friends, I would see work he had done for them. In 1989, my Paint horse was hunter champion and my husband commissioned Wally to paint a portrait."

Nall first came to Middleburg in the early 1970s. His good friend, Mrs. Reginald Vickers, of Middleburg, said, "He's a very unassuming person. It took awhile

for him to get established here, but we're a very chatty community. One person would have a painting by him and tell their friends."

When his reputation was established, he was in great demand to paint favorite animals and field sports. His paintings have appeared on the cover of *The Chronicle of the Horse* 15 times. His works have also been on exhibit at the Museum of Hounds and Hunting in Leesburg.

Nall originally came from Piedmont, California. During World War II, he served in the Army's First Cavalry. After the war he studied at the College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, California. He soon found steady work as a commercial artist but his love remained with horses. In addition to riding in and judging horse shows, he founded the Los Altos Hunt in Woodside and served as the first master. In later years, he moved east to New Jersey, foxhunting near his home and working out of a studio in New York City.

The beauty of Virginia's renowned hunt country lured him south to Middleburg, the land of pristine foxhunting country and fine horse shows. "He fell in love with this country and made it here," said Mrs. Vickers.

Book Reviews *Continued from page 6*

I guess, is why I'm writing this book... I don't expect to convince anyone about anything. But I can at least...add something to the debate."

Wild Host does contribute to the debate. It is a call for open dialogue and increased understanding between those on opposing sides. Isaacson believes quite strongly that hunting would be better for it. While he is unable to defend hunting purely for sport, remarking a number of times that "hunting is cruel," he passionately defends hunting (and shooting and fishing) as providing direct or indirect benefit to animal welfare, wildlife conservation, and – significantly – as a vehicle by which we humans stay in contact with our

history and our nature.

Isaacson has done the hunting world a favor with *Wild Host*. With style and elegance, he has given both supporters and detractors great food for thought and a timely invitation to constructively present their differences. He even ventures to propose how hunting might change and thus survive, but he doesn't pretend to have the answer. He doesn't even pretend that there is an answer that will please everyone. He does suggest, however, that through the many grey areas surrounding the debate, there just might be room for compromise. And that seems a good enough reason to listen.

— Robert Weber

The Chairman's Council

These friends of the National Sporting Library have taken a leadership role in their support of the Library by joining the Chairman's Council:

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