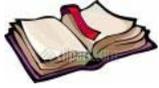


BOOKMARK



Fiction and Nonfiction News from Janet Litherland

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Potpourri

In a recent Internet article, I wrote about the casual use of unfamiliar words. (http://www.ezinearticles.com/?expert=Janet_Litherland) Then, while reading *Ellis Island* (see adjacent column), many such words jumped out at me and I couldn't help but chuckle. Examples: bellicosity, approbation, pluperfect, aigrette. Do you look up words as you go, or just breeze on through and hope you catch the meaning? I'm curious. Send me an e-mail.

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In the first few issues of *Bookmark* I discussed the importance of writing memoirs and gave you some pointers to help you do just that. I figure by now that you're either well on your way to completion, you've slacked off, or you've given up all together. Which is it? Your memoir is the most important and interesting book/papers your descendants will ever read. It doesn't have to be perfect. It just has to be *written*. So, get busy!

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Back issues of *Bookmark* can be seen at: www.janetlitherland.com/newsletter.htm

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are available at:

Amazon.com
BarnesAndNoble.com
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Historical Fiction

I like to read stories based on historical events or people—fiction, but well researched so that all of the material surrounding the story is factual. I don't mean general fiction placed in a long-ago period. So what do I mean? Here are three, which I read in the past couple of months:

Ellis Island by Fred Mustard Stewart (1983) follows five young immigrants, full of dreams and expectations, who entered America through that famous portal. "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free ..." Stewart paints an in-depth picture of the kinds of people who shaped our world, yours and mine, taking us to Broadway and Tin Pan Alley, to the coal mines of Pennsylvania, into the politics of the times, and into World War I. (I also recommend a beautiful song called "Ellis Island," sung by The Irish Tenors: "Isle of hope, Isle of tears, Isle of freedom, Isle of fears ...") Those early immigrants were afraid of what lay ahead in America, but they were more afraid to return to what they'd left behind.

After a confusing Prologue and first few pages of *Jack Knife* (Virginia Baker, 2007), I was off and running with time travelers to 1880s London, when Jack the Ripper was raging through that city. I will always give a book 20 pages to engage me; if it does not, I won't read it—there simply isn't "reading time" to waste. Fortunately, this one caught my attention on page 10 and never let me down! Well researched, accurate historical background. The only annoying flaw in this otherwise riveting tale—poor copyediting, shame on the publisher. (I am also posting these comments on Amazon.com.)

If you are interested in English history, particularly the era (and wives) of Henry VIII, you will be fascinated, as I was, by *The Boleyn Inheritance* (Philippa Gregory, 2006). If you have little or no interest in such history, you will not enjoy this book. It's a hefty tome at 514 pages and could be confusing, if you are not familiar with King Henry's six wives. Given that he married three Catherines, two Annes, and one Jane—and that another Jane (Jane Boleyn, Lady Rochford), alternates the narration with Anne of Cleves and Catherine (Kathryn, Katharine) Howard—you may need a card catalog to keep the characters straight! This book concerns Henry's fourth and fifth wives and how each achieved, and lost, the throne as Queen of England. It provides amazing—and often frightening—insight into the customs of the times.

And may I recommend *Vanished* (Janet Litherland, 2007). Oops! That's my book, isn't it? But it does reflect history—WWII—and swings back and forth in time between the 1940s and present day. Some history; some mystery.

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And speaking of *Vanished*, the Thomas County (GA) Library hosted a discussion/signing for me on June 26. A very nice group of readers attended!

FICTION AND NONFICTION NEWS FROM
JANET LITHERLAND



I love to hear from my readers!

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Enjoying Essays (nonfiction)

In an earlier issue of this newsletter, I mentioned my 10-volume set of little books titled *Seeing Europe with Famous Authors* (1914). Since I'm planning another trip to Ireland in the near future, I decided to revisit the essay by William Makepeace Thackeray, which originally appeared in *The Irish Sketchbook* (1845). Here is a delightful excerpt about one of my favorite parts of that beautiful country:

"The journey from Glengariff to Kenmare is one of astonishing beauty. This wild, beautiful road commands views of the famous lakes and vast blue mountains about Killarney. ... We rattled up to the Kenmare Arms; and so ended, not without a sigh on my part, one of the merriest six-hour rides that five yachtsmen, one cockney, five women and a child, the carman, and a countryman with an alpeen [a fighting stick] ever took in their lives. ... Drumming and trumpeting was heard at a little distance, and presently we found ourselves on the rocky shores of beautiful little Innisfallen [island] ... The horns performed some Irish airs prettily; and, at length, at the instigation of a fellow who went swaggering about with a pair of whirling drumsticks, all formed together and played—the active drum of course most dreadfully out of time."

Also included in this volume's 80 essays are: "Stonehenge," Ralph Waldo Emerson; "Westminster Abbey," Washington Irving; and "Burns's Land" [Scotland], Nathaniel Hawthorne.

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Janet's Book News