



**BOOK REVIEWS**  
**What's New on Library Shelves**  
 by Jose Mann

Bah! Humbug! As if it weren't bad enough, having to survive family gatherings, extra servings we neither wanted nor requested and those visitors who dropped in just as peace and quiet had finally returned, NOW we have to go through (Eeek! Grumble! Grumble!!) **FEBRUARY!!!**

The month with no (zero!) holidays. The month that could (and should) be cancelled. The month of the dreaded February Blahs!

Well, we can't get away from February, but we can certainly send our spirits away to be refreshed. Let's begin with An Irish House, edited by Sybil Connolly. Our visit to Irish castles, manors, "cottages" will nurture our romantic ideas of lovely decorated rooms, beautiful halls, inviting fireplaces. (Have you ever noticed that these books never mention drafts in these dwellings built in pre-insulation times?) Accompanying recipes include such everyday items as champagne, castor sugar, pheasants ... you know, all those things left over from your Christmas festivities.

Great Journeys is based on a new BBC series (soon to be PBS??) with photos by Tom Owen Edmunds. There are 7 lovely journeys planned by different people. Travel the "Silk Road" with Colin Thubron; the "Ho Chi Minh trail" with Philip Jones Griffiths. (They ever do the "Pan American Highway" - Remember those Nissan commercials?) The photography is exquisite and each travel guide is full of anecdotes. (Why none about dysentery? Is the British constitution that much harder?)

The Members of the National Institute for Exploration (Does National Geographic know about these people?) has produced Egypt: Images in Adventure, complete with lovely romantic poses of Egyptian people, places, flora and fauna. (No beggars - nothing about the "odours" - What a lovely way to travel!) Michael Goulding, in a non-professional tone, provides lots of scientific information about Amazon: The Flooded Forest. (Another BBC-PBS series.) There are fewer photos than in the other books, but those included are enough to make you phone your travel agent. (Don't ever consider mosquitoes, bugs, spiders big

enough to eat a horse, or squishy things to step on.) In a more personal style, James A. Michener and John King offer us Six Days in Havana, Michener's observations and reflections while researching his Cuban section of Caribbean. (Also new on our library shelf.) I liked John King's photos the best of all those reviewed. They are not glossy; the colours are warmer. People seem more natural, less posed. And the "scars" of everyday life are visible.

February is also the time when seed catalogues provide a much needed get-away for a certain sub-species. You know, those people who salivate over pictures of purple cauliflower, white beets, blue beans. (Blue cows, too?) For these, some support is available in Jane Packer's first in a series Flowers For All Seasons: Summer. Or try Richard Bigrove's The Flower Garden. Or Gordon T. Ledbetter's Water Garden. A quick fix for those in need.

With any of these, another February will soon be over and done with and Spring will be only 3 weeks away.

**WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE LIBRARY?**

Plenty! People are selecting books, browsing through magazines, reading, and studying. Some are attending film programs, or story times. Staff may be having a planning session, or be doing some filing. Volunteers spend time processing and repairing books. These and many other jobs like installing new shelves or relocating sections of the book collection are best done when the library is closed. In fact, the better business is, the more books and magazines that are borrowed, and the more questions that are asked of a librarian, the more she has to do when the Library is closed. This is GREAT: our librarians thrive on public service. In recognition of this, Portland and Seeley's Bay branches have adjusted their hours slightly to allow a ½ hour more closed time per week. When you see the lights on, or the librarian's car near by during closed hours, you know that she is busy preparing her shelves and her self to offer you helpful and friendly service the next time that you come in.

**SHARING NATURE WITH CHILDREN**  
**Rideau Valley Conservation Authority**

Children are imbued with an innate sense of curiosity and wonder. The challenge to the outdoor educator is to guide both children and adults on the path of awareness of our relationship with other living creatures and our place in the natural world.

The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority has been meeting this challenge for over two decades. The Authority's Conservation education program's goal is to have an informed public that is knowledgeable about natural resource management and can work with the Authority to ensure conservation of the watershed's renewable resources into the future.

There is no better place to start to create an informed public than by meeting with the Valley's school children and their parents and teachers. To this end, the Authority has established conservation education programs at several conservation areas throughout the watershed.

At Foley Mountain Conservation Area, the ecology and natural resources of the Canadian Shield are highlighted. At Perth Wildlife Reserve, wildlife management techniques are demonstrated.

At the Mill Pond Conservation Areas, staff help visitors discover the joys of maple syrup making and woodlot management. The Baxter Conservation Area offers a variety of school and public programs which include interpretation of



the ecology and of the flood plain and its management.

Heritage interpretation is not neglected. Children and adults may visit Watson's Mill at Dickenson Square Conservation Area to learn about the historical connection between water power and local resources, milling and community development. The Silversides Tool Museum at the Perth Wildlife Reserve has a large collection of 19th. century tools from Lanark County. They are displayed to show visitors how our pioneers ancestors lived and worked.

Through school visits and public programs valley residents have a chance to experience the natural world. Away from the bustle and noise of cities and towns, radios, televisions and rush hour traffic, they are encouraged by Authority staff to let their senses respond to the sounds, smells, views and textures of the forests, fields, rocks and ponds.

The experience gained through visiting a conservation area and meeting an enthusiastic interpreter is invaluable. It enables school children to make sense of what is learned in the classroom. Their parents and teachers may re-experience the wonder of nature that they enjoyed in childhood.

**TOM SCOVIL**

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