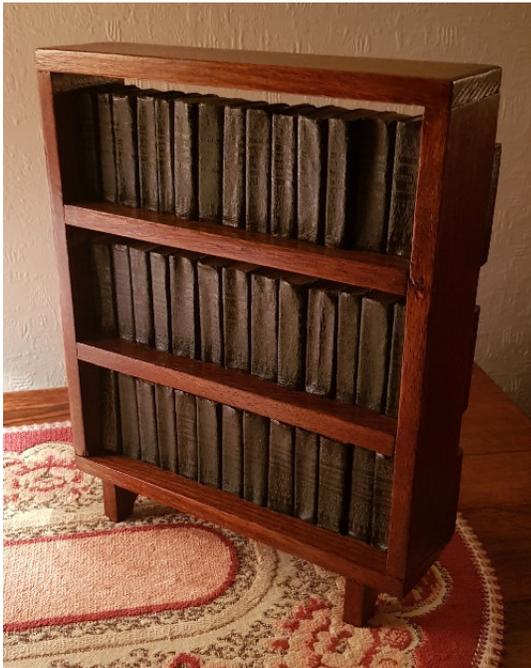


1) Shakespeare's Works



These are my wife Sharon's. Shakespeare's Complete Works in 40 miniature volumes which include a biography and glossary along with his poems and sonnets. Published by Allied Newspapers of 200 Grays Inn Road, London they date to circa 1930. Typically of those days, when we were married in 1969 neither of us brought much to the party, as it were, in the way of things. Our 'bottom drawer' consisted of several items of essential linen, bed clothes, towels and not much more. With one suitcase of our clothes, my briefcase and a brand new electric convection heater which we bought with a £25 wedding gift on our arrival at Walthamstow Underground station we struggled up the hill towards the old part of town heading for Number 8 The Drive where we had rented our first furnished flat.

We had nothing other than a few pounds in our pockets (reserved for a second hand gas cooker) and the few things we subsequently recovered from our homes later have always been of great value to us.

One of these treasured possessions was 26 of these 40 volumes kept in the bottom half of an old chocolate box hidden away for years under socks and shirts. They were given to Sharon about the age of 12 by her Uncle Alan Buckley. Alan was the eldest of her Eastwood Aunts and Uncles all of whom she would see on and off during an annual holiday in Eastwood for a few weeks in the summer staying with her Nan and Granddad Alan Buckley.

The younger Alan at that time was a dustman. He had rescued these books from someone's bin.

When these books were first sold, and I have a strong suspicion that they were sold one by one

on subscription and collected, it was possible to buy a miniature bookcase to keep a completed set in. This we discovered a few years ago when Ebay came on the scene. It was possible to find listings of both the complete set with bookcase or individual volumes so over the next three years, as the missing volumes came up, we bought them, one by one, until Sharon had the complete set.

The next part of this book story involves Nancy and Frank Procter. Nancy was my mother's work friend, both were seamstresses, their birthdays were on the same day and over the years they became extremely close. In Mum's mature years, in other words her whole post war life, Nancy was her only friend. Nancy's husband managed a sawmill and when my dad died several boxes of light mahogany parquet floor tiles that Frank had given to him came my way. Eight of them made this bookcase. There is no real work in that bookcase, the hardest bit for sure was the varnishing. Six of them were used untouched, the two shelves untouched except for shortening at one end by two thicknesses with the cut off oddments being used for feet, the whole thing being glued and cramped. Bookshelf length was, fortuitously, exactly right for the number of books. It stands 250mm high and 204 mm wide.

Instead of being hidden away for safe keeping they are now on display and looking very much at home in their new bookcase, books once binned in Nottingham rescued by Alan, given to Sharon in a set subsequently completed by myself are now in a bookcase with mahogany tiles once owned by my Dad which were given to him and made by my Mum's friend's husband, Frank, from Yorkshire.