

Dear

Well, I suppose that every adventure has to end, and after three months of travelling around the globe by plane, train and ship, it's nice to be back home in Melbourne.

Being home also means that I can't put off any longer getting started on writing my next book, the third in my series on Shakespeare's so-called 'lost years'. Regular subscribers will know that I've written two books about this period in Shakespeare's life when he was young and unknown. The first, *What News on the Rialto?*, took him to Italy, while the second, *The Queen's Player*, explored how he might have got his start in the theatre.

My new book, tentatively titled *The Northern Court*, sees young Will stuck in Lancashire, his budding career seemingly cut off before it has really started. The unexpected reappearance of someone from his past drags him down a path he is reluctant to travel, but which offers some hope of a return to London and his beloved theatre. Anyway, that's the central idea, though I haven't figured out how it all comes together yet! That's the fun of writing.

As always, this month's newsletter has **reviews of the books** I've been reading and the **films I've seen**, plus **my latest blog post**, on Shakespeare's naughtier side. Hope you enjoy.

One last thing: if you like my newsletter, please don't hesitate to forward it on to any of your friends who you think might enjoy it. And you can tell them that anyone who subscribes to my mailing list will get a free copy of my novella ***Caesar or Nothing***.

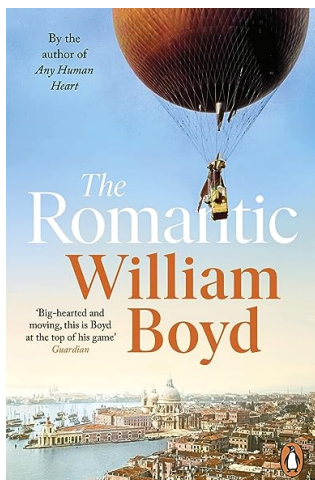
See you next month.

Naughty Will Shakespeare



Apparently a school district in Florida has decided to censor Shakespeare because of concerns that teaching the full text might contravene the state's notorious 'don't say gay' law, which seemingly prohibits teaching anything with a sexual content. That sent me off to find out what might have been worrying them, and it turns out that Will did indeed have a bit of a naughty side - though you probably need to have a working knowledge of Elizabethan slang to get most of his jokes. Have a read about it in my latest blog entry.

[Read more](#)



Book Review

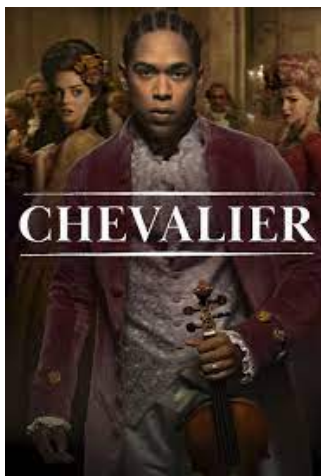
The Romantic, by William Boyd

This was a bit of a deviation from my usual fare of books set in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but it was an excursion worth taking.

The romantic of the title is Cashel Greville-Ross, born out of wedlock to an Anglo-Irish lordling in 1799. Through the course of a life that spans most of the nineteenth century, Cashel wanders the globe seeking his fortune by way of various careers as a soldier, farmer, and writer. Along the way he encounters some of the epochal figures of the age, and of course falls in love (several times).

It's all told with great verve and the pace never flags for a minute, so that Cashel's whole fantastic life seems to go by in a flash. His encounters with famous people (sorry, no spoilers as to who they might be) are entirely believable and often amusing.

I've only ever read one of Boyd's previous books - the sharply humorous *An Ice-Cream War*, but after reading this brilliant tour-de-force, I think I am going to have to delve into his backlist and see what other delights there are to be had.



Film Review

Chevalier

There seems to be an avalanche of biopics either on movie screens or on the way there at the moment - the lives of Robert Oppenheimer, Napoleon

Bonaparte, Golda Meir and Leonard Bernstein are all being given the cinema treatment.

One that might have slipped under the radar is *Chevalier*, the story of the 'black Mozart', Joseph Bologne, who was born on the island of Guadeloupe in the West Indies. The illegitimate offspring of a planter, he came to Paris as a boy, where he grew up to become a brilliant swordsman, virtuoso violinist, and a talented composer, writing half a dozen operas, a symphony, and numerous chamber works.

Much feted in Parisian society, where he lived a somewhat riotous life, he was taken up by Phillipe d'Orleans, and was given the title of Chevalier de Saint George. Then, after the revolution of 1789, he served with distinction as a military officer, and survived the political machinations of the Terror, eventually dying in 1793, aged 55.

That is the barest outline of a life that seems to have been full of incident and drama. The movie picks and chooses, not always wisely, between the various events in Bologne's career. For example, the production team seem to have decided that his post-revolution military career was of no interest, which is a pity.

And as is the way with these things, there are wholly spurious scenes (such as the musical face-off with an arrogant young Mozart, which, though entertaining, certainly never happened), things that *might* have happened (an affair with the wife of the Marquis de Montalambert, which turned out to be a very dangerous liaison indeed), and scenes that really did happen. A quick visit to Wikipedia before going to see the film will help you tell which is which.

But these queries aside, *Chevalier* is without doubt a beautiful looking film that accurately recreates the look and feel of eighteenth century Paris. Though it wears its heart on its sleeve a little too much for my liking, the film does do a great job of bringing to life a character who I for one had never heard of before.

Oh, and though certainly no Mozart, his music, which features heavily in the film's soundtrack, is indeed brilliant.

Literary Putdown of the Month

The kind of review I hope I never get:

'This is not a novel to be tossed aside lightly. It should be thrown with great force.' - Dorothy Parker on Benito Mussolini's novel *Claudia*

(Quoted in Matthew Parris' marvellous book *Scorn with Extra Bile*)

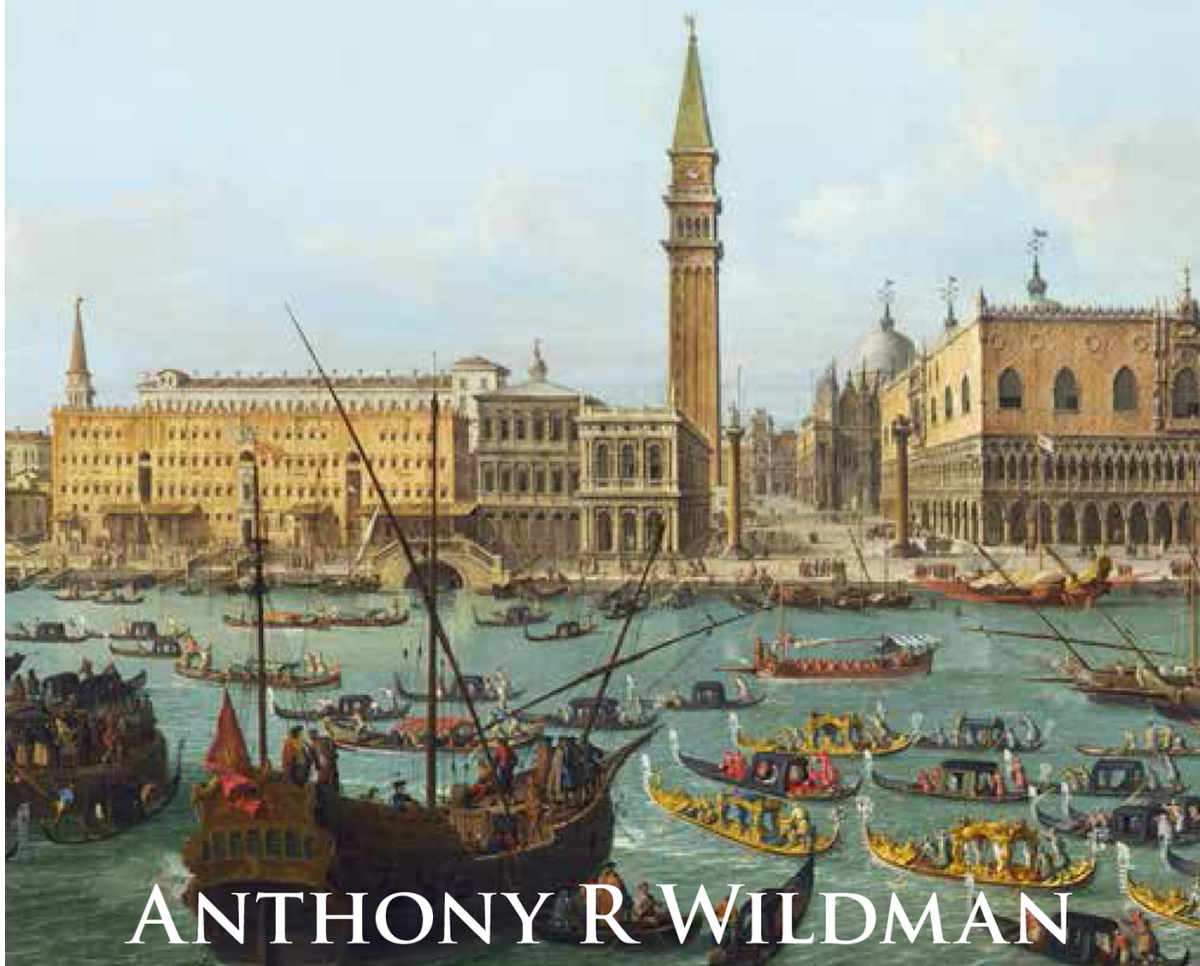


About Me

Historical fiction is my thing. I've been fascinated with history all my life, and though I've read many, many history books, I have also learned a huge amount through reading fictional accounts of life and lives in the near and distant past. The mysterious gaps in the historical record are a source of endless fascination, and both as a writer and reader of historical fiction, I love stories that fill in those gaps.

WHAT NEWS ON THE RIALTO?

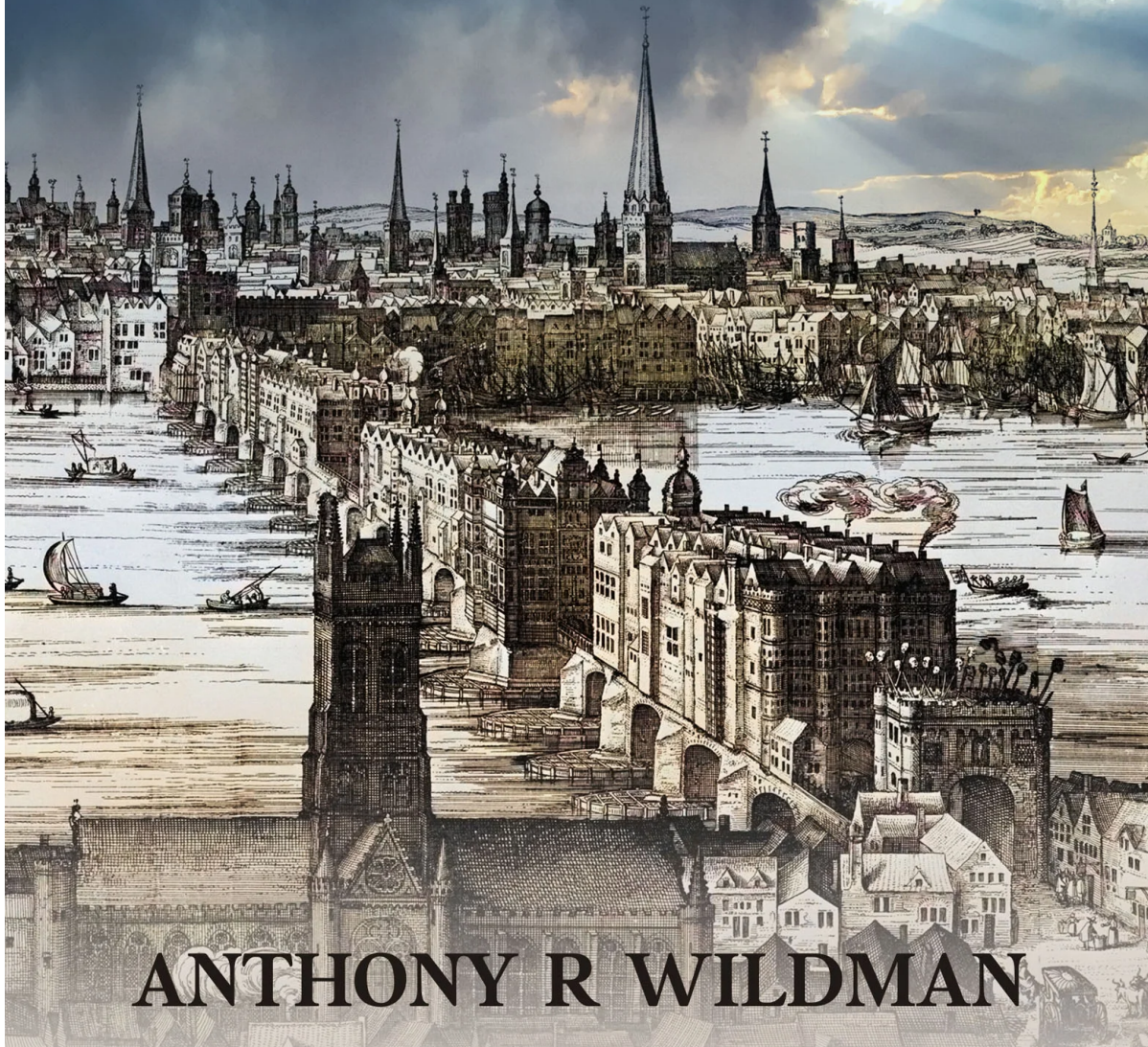
THE LOST YEARS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



ANTHONY R WILDMAN

THE QUEEN'S PLAYER

THE LOST YEARS OF WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARE BOOK 2



ANTHONY R WILDMAN

The DIPLOMAT *of* FLORENCE

A Novel of Machiavelli and the Borgias



Anthony R. Wildman

Caesar or Nothing

The Last Days of Cesare Borgia



A Novella

by

Anthony R Wildman



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