

Reading Finnegans Wake In Bed (Apparently)

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<http://cforster.com/2013/06/finnegans-wake-reading-material>

I am, at the moment, trying to put together a relatively brief post typography during the Second World War. Reading for that post, I encountered this odd gem. Valerie Holman, in *Print for Victory*, notes the results of a 1942 Mass Observation survey, studying reading habits during the war. While people reported less time to read, they “still attached importance to good print, and that one of the most important qualities a book should possess was its suitability for reading in bed.” And what were they reading in bed? The study also includes the answers to the question: “favourite reading since the start of the war.” The list of the most frequent responses includes Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, Hemingway’s *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and... *Finnegans Wake*.

Holman offers a brief footnote, stately laconically: “The inclusion of this title is extraordinary, but it carries no further explanation” (Holman 53).

Works Cited

- Holman, Valerie. *Print for Victory: Book Publishing in England, 1939-1945*. London: British Library, 2008. Print.