

Printing History News

The Newsletter of the National Printing Heritage Trust,
Printing Historical Society and Friends of St Bride Library

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ST BRIDE EVENTS

Pen and print: the legacy of Edward Johnston 1906–2006
Exhibition, Wednesday 4–Thursday 19 October. Preview 3 October, 5:30 p.m., followed by opening lecture at 7:00 p.m. The speaker Gerald Fleuss has been a working calligrapher and illuminator for the past thirty years. He is the co-author (with John Nash) of *Practical calligraphy* (1991) and is a Fellow of the Society of Scribes and Illuminators. He is the Founder-Chairman of the Edward Johnston Foundation.

The exhibition marks the centenary of the first publication of Edward Johnston's influential *Writing & illuminating, & lettering*, a manual of calligraphy which has been in print ever since. Johnston's teaching and philosophy will be shown through contemporary work in many mediums including formal penmanship, carved and engraved lettering and modern typeface design.

Printing the toy theatre

Exhibition, Wednesday 22 November into the new year. Preview 21 November, 5:30 p.m., followed by opening lecture 'We can't turn 'em out fast enough' at 7:00 p.m. The speaker David Powell is the author of *William West and the Regency toy theatre* (2004) and *W. G. Webb and the Victorian toy theatre* (2005).

The exhibition uses prints, original plates and ephemera, largely from private collections, to show how a rather shadowy group of small-scale entrepreneurs produced and marketed sheets of scenes and characters, with playbooks and 'tinselled portraits', passing on printing plates and pirating images while also trading in a huge variety of miscellaneous items. By the close of the nineteenth century, writers and artists including Robert Louis Stevenson looked nostalgically at these gaudy fragments of their boyhood, and began a revival that kept the toy

theatre tenuously alive through the twentieth century.

The material on display will offer a cross-section of graphic reproduction methods, from etching with hand colouring, through lithography with stencil colouring to colour printing. David Powell has selected material for the exhibition and written the catalogue, with a contribution from Jan Piggott, Archivist of Dulwich College. Alan Powers, of the University of Greenwich, has coordinated the team.

For St Bride opening times see page 4.

Printing Historical Society Conference

2–4 July 2006

Report by Nadja Guggi

The Printing Historical Society joined forces with the Ephemera Society for a two-day conference at the University of Reading on the theme of 'Jobbing printing: the stuff of life'. Following a reception at the recently refurbished Museum of English Rural Life on Sunday afternoon, the conference opened on Monday with an information-packed first day of lectures in the Department of Meteorology. On Tuesday, the conference moved to the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication, which houses



Intaglio and lithographic printing demonstration given by Alan Hardie at the PHS Conference (photo N. Guggi)



Letterpress printing demonstration given by Richard Lawrence at the PHS Conference (photo N. Guggi)

the Centre for Ephemera Studies, for a more informal and interactive day of short talks, workshops and displays.

The lectures were delivered by a remarkable constellation of speakers, many of whom are active in both the PHS and Ephemera Society. Rob Banham's talk explored the innovative and often cunning ways in which the state lottery of the nineteenth century was advertised. Patrick Frazer related the story of lithographic printer George Edward Madeley. James Mosley's talk on 'big types' uncovered some of the strategies for making large types in the period 1780–1860, many of which remain mysterious and almost wholly undocumented. The afternoon session began with Barry McKay's talk on the history of chapbooks, followed by Patricia Thomas on the role of printed documents in the colonization of New Zealand. Mary Ann Bolger discussed the Catholic practice of sending memorial cards, which is still very much alive in her native Ireland, and Graham Hudson sought to dispel the contemptuous view of 'artistic printing' as an absurdity, and demonstrated how *The printers' international specimen exchange* raised the standard of letterpress jobbing printing, with work of



Display of stenciling tools at the PHS Conference (photo N. Guggi)

such technical competence as to rival chromolithography. The first day ended with a talk by Paul Shaw on the early career of W. A. Dwiggins.

Tuesday's talks, though somewhat more informal, were no less engaging. Sebastian Carter shared his experience as a jobbing printer at the Rampant Lions Press, showing how clients' requests are translated into a piece of printed ephemera. Michael Twyman, offering six case studies, demonstrated the vast spectrum of work undertaken by the nineteenth-century lithographic jobbing printer. Maurice Collins's anecdotal account of his time as an apprentice compositor was easily the most entertaining talk of the day. Eric Kindel's talk was delivered in front of an attractive display of jobbing stenciling materials from his own collection. Using the example of Poynders, printers in Reading, Claire Bolton discussed the difficulties of establishing the history of a jobbing printing firm when there are no surviving business records and no archive of printed work to study. Johan de Zoete's talk gave a brief history of the Haarlem firm of Enschedé en Zonen.

The Department of Typography & Graphic Communication boasts a printing workshop with letterpress, intaglio and lithographic presses, a Monotype caster, as well as some superb historical collections and archives in the areas of printing, lettering and design – an ideal setting for the conference. In the foyer,

delegates were tempted to linger by the haunting voices of workers describing the world of printing as they knew it for the Oral History Printing Archive – a collection of interviews with workers in the printing and allied trades – and by the wealth of jobbing work on display. Also on display were collections from the Archives Department in Reading University Library, including proposed designs for biscuit packaging from the Huntley and Palmer Archive and a multitude of jobbing work from the John Lewis Collection. The Centre for Ephemera Studies, housed in the Department, put up a display of treasures from the Maurice Rickards Collection. David Bolton, who has studied hundreds of jobbing type cases, was on hand to explain the differences between various kinds of cases, and the Bradford Industrial Museum displayed a selection of their collection of printing blocks. Printing workshops were run by Claire Bolton, Richard Lawrence, Alan Hardie and Mick Stocks.

A feeling of enjoyment pervaded this third PHS conference which, at times, took on an almost festival-like atmosphere, with people milling around chatting, looking, enjoying themselves. Even the talks, although academic, had an element of humour, light-heartedness, even tongue-in-cheek. A winning formula: the high standard of scholarship one has come to expect from the PHS – but tempered with a sense of fun.

Friends of St Bride Annual Report

Rob Banham

The events organised by the Friends continue to flourish. The lectures and exhibitions over the past twelve months have been of fantastic quality and variety and have been extremely well attended. The Friends are enormously grateful to Catherine Dixon who works hard to organise these events and to Lindsay Newman for invigilating the exhibitions.

The first Justin Howes memorial lecture was a real highlight and those who attended thoroughly enjoyed James Mosley's wonderful presentation. The Justin Howes Memorial Lecture fund currently stands at £3,393.53. We are still some way short of our target of £5,000.00. Please contact the Library if you would like to make a donation.

I am also delighted to announce a new Friends venture, the St Bride Library journal, entitled *Ultrabold*, edited and designed by Simon Loxley, which will be published every six months. The first issue should be ready soon and will be free to all paid-up members of the Friends. We are hoping that this will encourage new visitors to the Library and new Friends of St Bride.

Unfortunately I have to report that the number of paying members is growing very slowly – we currently have just 150. Our main goal for the next year is to increase that number and the income from membership fees. This will be achieved partly through raising the annual fee from £15.00 to £30.00 (from October 2006) bringing the Friends into line with other similar organisations.

We have agreed to change the way in which the Friends work with the St Bride Foundation, working more closely together on the organisation of events to make the most of our strengths. This has already worked extremely well in the case of the one-day newspaper conference, where the Friends put the programme together but the event was managed by the Foundation. Over £2,000.00 was raised for the Library, and other one-day events are planned for 2007. The Foundation will manage the Friends' funds and this will enable them to collect Gift Aid on monies raised by the Friends.

GRANTS IN PRINTING HISTORY FOR 2007

The Printing Historical Society is pleased to continue its limited number of small grants for the third year, including:

- * Research on topics relating to the history of printing
- * Publishable reports on archives relating to the history of printing

Grants are limited to historical research in printing technology, the printing and related industries, printed materials and artefacts, type and typesetting, print culture, and printing processes and design.

Applications for research funding may be up to £1,000; applications for publishable reports on archives, up to £500. In both cases grants may be used to cover material or other expenses, including travel, subsistence, photography, etc. Applications should specify the amount requested and the use of funds envisaged; costs incurred before application are unlikely to be successful. Students, academics and independent researchers may apply. Some preference will be given to independent researchers.

Send a brief covering letter, with the name, address and e-mail of one referee (who has agreed to serve as referee), and a separate description of the project of no more than 500 words (or two pages of A4) to the PHS Grants and Prizes Sub-Committee, Peggy Smith, 18 Market Hill, Clare, Sudbury CO10 8NN, UK. m.m.smith@reading.ac.uk. Application deadline: 1 January 2007. Awards will be announced at the PHS AGM in March, for disbursement in April.

Theatrical Review

Richard Lawrence

Gutenberg! The Musical!

Your reviewer was seduced by the title: perhaps this is musical recognition for the inventor of movable type? If a successful opera can be crafted from the events surrounding President Nixon's visit to China in the early 1970s, why not the really important contribution of Johann Gutenberg to culture and history?

Well, from a printing history point of view, the event was a great disappointment: a repeated claim that Gutenberg invented the printing press was as substantive and wrong as the

history got. However from the point of view of musical entertainment, the seduction was completely successful. Gutenberg is a convenient peg on which to hang the 'real' story of two would-be West End stars previewing their idea for a new musical to the audience. Anthony King and Scott Brown manage to play a cast of some fifteen characters between them while sending up the form of the musical with great verve and skill. Not always as succinct or as caustic as the work of Tom Lehrer, nevertheless there are parallels to be drawn as truly awful rhymes are made. It is performed with gusto: the inventiveness of the cast of two in representing a full chorus line is extremely funny.

So, if you are seeking printing history, forget it. If you want an enjoyable evening of fun being poked at the stage musical, go and you will most certainly enjoy.

Gutenberg! The Musical! (with two exclamation marks), played in New York, off Broadway, in 2005, and at the Jermyn Street Theatre in London in January 2006. It is currently enjoying a run at the Sage Theatre, 711 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10036-1509, with a new cast. This is part of the New York Musical Theatre Festival. For further details please see www.gutenbergthemusical.com.

Designer Bookbinders lectures

The following lectures will be held at the Art Workers Guild, 6 Queen Square, London WC2, and begin at 6:30 p.m. Admission is £6.00 (£4.00 for members of Designer Bookbinders or £2.00 for students). Further details can be obtained from Virginia McArdle on 020 7253 6976, or by e-mail at lectures@designerbookbinders.org.uk. Designer Bookbinders has a website at www.designerbookbinders.org.uk.

Tuesday 3 October. Phil Baines, 'Printing, graphic design and marketing: 70 years of Penguin cover design'.

Tuesday 7 November. Tom Kemp, 'From craftsman to artist in 10,000 easy steps'.

Tuesday 5 December. Stephen Bury 'On the edge of the book: artist's book or artist's multiple?'

Tuesday 9 January 2007. Harrington and Squires, 'Working in a thin space'.

Tuesday 6 February 2007. Tracey Rowledge and Kathy Abbott, 'Tomorrow's past' a talk on the ongoing exhibition-based project to create contemporary bindings for antiquarian books.

Tuesday 6 March 2007. Frances Wood, 'Lost in translation: Chinese books in Europe'. The Middleton Lecture for 2007.

Census of the Kelmscott Chaucer

William S. Peterson and Sylvia Holton Peterson

We are compiling a census of copies of the Kelmscott Press Chaucer (1896) in both public and private collections – a census that will be published in book form by 2008. Our census will be more than a simple checklist; we are describing precisely the distinguishing physical characteristics of each copy and reconstructing, as far as is possible, its provenance. To that end, we need information about bindings, ownership history, bookplates, inscriptions and exhibitions. While we have been able to locate many copies in libraries with on-line catalogues, we need help in identifying small museums, club libraries, business libraries and private collections throughout the world that may own a Kelmscott Chaucer. In some libraries (even very large ones) the holdings in Special Collections are not yet fully reflected in their electronic catalogues. We wish to include copies owned by private collectors in our census and will protect their anonymity if they wish. We will also list and describe copies that have been destroyed by war, fire or vandalism. In short, we are trying to be as comprehensive as possible. If you can offer any information that would be helpful to us, please write to Sylvia Peterson at either sholtonz@cs.com or 517 A Street SE, Washington, DC 10003, USA.

Conference Reminder

The 2006 Friends of St Bride Library Conference, *Fast type, slow type*, will be held on 16–18 October at the Custard Factory in Birmingham. It has been organised by Typevents and is timed to co-incide with celebrations at Birmingham to mark Baskerville's tercentenary. Details of the Conference, speakers and activities may be found at www.typevents.com.

St Bride Library opening hours

exhibitions are open at the same times

Tuesday 12:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

Wednesday 12:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m.

Thursday 12:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

New books on York printing history

Two new volumes have appeared in William K. Sessions's 'Greenback' series of York printing history studies. They are *Early Quaker printing* (12 pages, price £3.50) and *York's early printed ephemera* (iv, 78 pages, price £7.00). They are available from the Ebor Press, York YO3 9HS. Prices include post and packing.

John Jarrold website

The John Jarrold Printing Museum at Norwich has recently launched a revised website. It includes a detailed list of the holdings of the Museum, its archives and resources, plus photographs of many of the presses and other artefacts held (in sections devoted to letterpress, lithography and bookbinding). See www.johnjarroldprintingmuseum.org.uk.

LIBANUS PRESS

Michael Mitchell is closing his letterpress workshop at the Libanus Press and is seeking a new home for the type and equipment. There are several presses, including a Heidelberg with bed-size of 520 x 380 mm, an Autovic platen and a Vandercook No. 4, plus a Monotype caster and numerous matrices, and an extensive collection of type, both Monotype and foundry, in case. There are also guillotines and other equipment. Michael is unwilling to see the workshop broken up, and would like to find a working home for the whole plant. To this end he is willing to pass the entire workshop on to a suitable individual or body gratis (the acquirer would be responsible only for the costs of moving the type and equipment). For further details please contact Michael Mitchell at The Libanus Press, Rose Tree House, Silverless Street, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 1JG. Tel: 01672 515378. E-mail: michael@libanuspress.co.uk. See also www.libanuspress.co.uk.

Printing Historical Society Publications Promotion Officer sought

The PHS is looking for someone to act as Publications Promotion Officer, to help bring the Society's books, *Journal* and other publications to wider notice through reviews, advertising, special promotions etc. If you would like to be involved in this aspect of the PHS please contact the Chairman, Peggy Smith (see 'Useful Contacts' below).

Ezra Pound exhibition catalogue

The University of Delaware has recently published *Ezra Pound in his time and beyond: the influence of Ezra Pound on twentieth-century poetry*, the catalogue of an exhibition held in their Hugh M. Morris Library between February and June. The catalogue was compiled by Jesse Rossa, and describes and reproduces books, manuscripts, photographs and ephemera from the Library's Special Collections, including material from the recently-acquired Robert A. Wilson collection. The catalogue has 48 pages in A5 format, and eight colour illustrations. Copies are available at \$10.00 (plus \$2.50 for postage) from the University of Delaware Library Associates, Morris Library, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware 19717-5267, USA. E-mail: UDLA@udel.edu.

Centre for Ephemera Studies event

A one-day colloquium on 'The trade card' will be held in the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication at the University of Reading on Wednesday 15 November, from 10.30 for 11.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. There will be speakers on several topics and a display of Belgian '*cartes porcelaine*' and American trade cards. Fee £50.00 including lunch, coffee etc. Further details: typography@reading.ac.uk.

Corrigendum

On page 3 of *PHN11* it was wrongly stated that Bi Sheng invented clay type in the 'seventh century'. This should have read 'eleventh century'. Apologies for the error.

SMALL AD

Arab Press for long term (ten year) loan. An Arab crown folio treadle platen press (pictured below), once used by the Stanbrook Abbey Press, Worcester, is available free (on long-term loan) from the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (where it was used by Leonard Gray between 1975 and 2003). The press is in good condition, but the rollers will need to be recovered. Please contact Philip Moore on 07831 149066 or philipmoore.brickfield@virgin.net.



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