

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 NEWS

The St Bride Library will shortly embark on a refurbishment project. The Library will be closed from 3 September 2007 for the first phase of the project, re-opening later in the autumn (date to be announced).

The refurbishment will create a new reading room in a more accessible location. An upgraded shelving and archiving system will allow faster retrieval of archive materials and make a greater volume of dormant collections readily available. Parts of the Victorian building will also be modernised to improve disabled access and create a more versatile and interactive library and museum space.

Mike Jenkins, chief executive of the St Bride Foundation, said "We apologise for the inconvenience caused by the temporary closure of the Library, but are confident the refurbishment will create a more accessible, stimulating and modern environment for a greater number of readers."

Fundraising for a larger-scale £7-million redevelopment of the Library has been put on hold until after the 2012 Olympics. However, the St Bride Foundation will continue to solicit essential financial support in the form of pledges, to permit ongoing conservation work to the Library's holdings.

EVENTS

PHS CONFERENCE

From hot metal to hot keys. The Printing Historical Society will hold its 2008 two-day conference in the Bridewell Hall at St Bride, on 22–23 April 2008. The theme will be the changes in the British printing industry between 1950 and 2000. The Donald Milham Award winners will be announced, and the awards presented. One of the features will be the option of a visit to West Ferry on the Isle of Dogs to view Europe's largest web-offset newspaper plant. For further information please

e-mail the conference organiser, Rob Clayton, on frobson@mbzonline.net. Details will shortly be mounted on the PHS website, and will also appear in the next issue of *Printing History News*.

PLUS International Design Festival

To be held 17–21 October 2007 at the Wild Building, Floodgate Street, Birmingham (England). PLUS is a unique design-led festival showcasing all that is innovative, pioneering and novel in the world of international typo/graphic design. The 2007 Festival not only provides a platform for contemporary professional designers, but also an arena for experimental work and a meeting point for the international design community. It also offers a forum for informed academic debate on typo/graphic design.

The 2007 PLUS International Design Festival comprises several elements including a commercial design exposition. The Expo presents pioneering work by leading international typo/graphic designers in the areas of print, web, video and animation. The Expo is not a trade show, but provides a platform from which the international typo/graphic community can present its most dynamic, ground-breaking and inspired work. For more information please visit www.youplusus.net.

MUSIC AND THE BOOK TRADE

The 29th Annual Conference on Book Trade History will deal with the printing and publishing of music from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. It will be held on Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 December 2007 at the Foundling Museum, 40 Brunswick Square, London, WC1E 7AZ. The full fee of £80.00 (students or one day £50.00), covers the conference, lunches and access to the Museum. A limited number of reduced-rate places, sponsored by the Bibliographical Society, are available to registered students. For further details see the website at www.aba.org.uk (Book Trade History Conference link).

Treasures from the Libraries and Collections of Gentlemen's Clubs and Learned Societies in London

This, the inaugural exhibition of the Association of Pall Mall Libraries, will be held between 28 September and 25 October 2007 at the Royal Society of Medicine Library, 1 Wimpole Street, London W1G 0AE. Admission is free and the exhibition is open Monday to Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For further details see www.rsm.ac.uk or contact library@rsm.ac.uk.

The exhibition offers a unique opportunity for the general public to see books and artefacts from the collections of the Alpine Club, the Army and Navy, the Athenaeum, the East India, the Garrick, the Naval and Military, the Oriental, the Reform, the Royal Automobile Club, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, the Royal Society of Medicine, the Royal United Services Institute and the Travellers Club.

Exhibits will include items of relevance to their respective institutions. The Garrick, for example, will display Alec Guinness's copy of a limited edition of *Hamlet*, illustrated by Henry Moore and dedicated to John Gielgud. The RAC will exhibit the pressure gauge meter from the 'Bluebird' in which Donald Campbell achieved the record speed of 403.1 m.p.h. on 17 July 1964; and the Royal Society of Medicine will show Rudyard Kipling's copy of Culpeper's *Herbal*.

Couleurs: les prouesses de la chromolithographie

This exhibition will be held in the Musée de l'Imprimerie, Lyon, from 15 November 2007 to 17 February 2008. It may well be the first devoted to the subject of chromolithography, and will assemble important examples of the process that have almost certainly never been seen together. Over 500 exhibits from various locations will

document the beginnings of the process in Germany, France and Britain and its later commercial development through to the twentieth century. A wide variety of work will be displayed, from book-illustration and reproductions of works of art to the 'chromos' of everyday life. Technical sections will explain how chromolithographs were made.

The exhibition is curated by Michael Twyman and will be accompanied by a publication focusing on the contributions of Godefroy Engelmann and Charles Hullmandel. For further details see www.bm-lyon.fr.

DESIGNER BOOKBINDERS LECTURES 2007

The following lectures will be held at the Art Workers Guild, 6 Queen Square, London WC1, at 6:30 p.m. The nearest tube stations are Holborn and Russell Square. Admission is £5.00 for members of DB, £7.00 for non-members, and £2.50 for students. Further details may be had from Julia Dummett and Rachel Ward-Sale on 01273 486718, e-mail lectures@designerbookbinders.org.uk, or at www.designerbookbinders.org.uk.

Tuesday 2 October, Lester Capon, *Extreme bookbinding*. On preserving a manuscript in Ethiopia.

Tuesday 6 November, Danny Flynn, typographer, *Laser-cutting and letterpress*. On the use of laser-cutting technology in both traditional and letterpress printing work for film and advertising and his collaboration with artist and bookbinder Eri Funazaki

Tuesday 4 December, Carolyn Trant, Parvenu Press, *Books and stuff: the quiddity of artist's books*. Artist Carolyn Trant talks about her books and making ideas work in organic materials. She will try to bring some real 'stuff' with her.

The Bookbining Competition Exhibition will be held at the John Rylands Library, Deansgate, Manchester from 18 November 2007 to 12 January 2008. The Library is open on Sundays and Tuesdays from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m. and from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on all other days (closed from Christmas to 1 January inclusive).

British Library Lecture

Pre-Reformation books of hours: from royal favourite to everybody's primer, will be given by Dr Cristina Dondi on



Alan May taking a pull on his reconstructed 'Gutenberg' press

Wednesday 14 November at 6:00 p.m. at the British Library Conference Centre, Meeting Room 2, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB. The British Library has recently acquired a previously unknown book of hours, printed in Antwerp in 1531 for the English market on the eve of the Reformation. Cristina Dondi will offer an illustrated overview of the fortunes of this well-known genre for lay and religious devotion, from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. Her talk will be followed by a drinks reception. Attendance is free, but please register your name and address by e-mail with Teresa Harrington at the British Library, on teresa.harrington@bl.uk.

Fine Press Book Fair

The 2007 Fine Press Book Fair will be held again this year at Oxford Brookes University, Gipsy Lane, Oxford, on Saturday 3 (11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.) and Sunday 4 November (10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). At least seventy fine and private presses, fifteen specialist book-

sellors, ten trade-suppliers and a range of societies will be exhibiting. There will also be a programme of lectures on the Sunday. Admission is by catalogue (price £5.00), valid for both days. For further details see www.fpba.com.

FEATURE

Reconstructions of a common press and a one-pull press by Alan May

In June 2006, Alan Marshall, director of Musée de l'Imprimerie at Lyon commissioned the construction of a replica common press from Alan May, a retired teacher from the Department of Typography and Graphic Communication at the University of Reading. The new press is to be used by museum staff for practical demonstrations. It is modelled on an English box hose press of around 1700 which is reputed to have been used by Benjamin Franklin when he came to England to work as a

printer in 1724. The original is now in the Smithsonian in Washington, DC. A description of this press, together with drawings and advice on its construction, were published by the Merrion Press in 1978 as *The Franklin Press at the Smithsonian* by Elizabeth Harris and Clinton Sisson. This publication was the main source of information used in this reconstruction.

The original press was built in elm but because of the ravages of Dutch elm disease in England this wood is no longer readily available here. It was decided instead to follow Moxon's advice and build in oak. Construction took about 800 hours. This was longer than expected, due mainly to the difficulties of sourcing suitable metal parts. On arrival at the Musée de l'Imprimerie it had to be carried, piece by piece, up a spiral stair and then rebuilt and retested. It is now fully operational.

In December 2006, Wavelength Films, an independent film company working for the BBC, learned of this reconstruction and expressed a desire to film a similar press being built and operated. They were interested because they had been commissioned by BBC 4 to prepare a program about the 'why' and 'how' of Gutenberg's success in using and adapting contemporary technologies to develop printing to the point where it was capable of high quality production and commercial viability.

It was pointed out at the first briefing that what little we know of Gutenberg's press indicated that it was somewhat different from the 'two-pull presses' that came later, and any attempt at the reconstruction of a 'one-pull press' would involve a good deal of speculation. They were not put off by this and in February 2007 agreed to fund the building of an experimental machine. Before settling on the final design, various models of the press framework were tried out and prototypes made of the carriage and bed assembly. In addition, a simple but effective method of obtaining register using the six pinholes found on leaves of the 'Gutenberg Bible' was devised, and a number of methods of making wooden threads and nuts tried out.

The press was completed on time in May, and filmed both under construction and in operation. A page from the Bible was set in a remarkably accurate facsimile of Gutenberg's original 'B42' typeface, re-cut by the Dale Guild Typefoundry in New York. The experimental 'one-pull press' (pictured opposite)



Emery Walker's study at 7 Hammersmith Terrace

printed very satisfactorily and, according to its builder, Alan May, could well shed light on a number of questions surrounding Gutenberg's press. Alan is currently writing an account of its design and construction with a view to future publication. The television programme is due to appear on BBC 4 in 2008, and will be presented by Stephen Fry.

Emery Walker Trust news

More tickets have just gone on sale for tours of Hammersmith's 'hidden gem' and this year visitors will get to see an extra room – Emery Walker's study on the first floor, reconstructed as it was in his lifetime using the original furniture, textiles, pictures and ceramics that survived in the house, along with the original Morris and Company wallpaper and curtains (pictured above).

The manner of decoration of Walker's house at 7 Hammersmith Terrace is very much that found in the homes of his friends, the leaders of the 'Arts and Crafts' movement, William Morris and Philip Webb. Thanks to the efforts of Walker's daughter, the furnishing and decoration of the house has survived almost exactly as it was in his lifetime. As such, it is the only authentic Arts and Crafts urban interior in Britain. The house includes furniture and hangings that belonged to William Morris, original Morris and Company wallpapers in every room, many of Morris and Webb's personal

possessions, including furniture, ceramics, glassware and metalwork by Cotswolds Arts and Crafts artists including Ernest Gimson, Ernest Barnsley, Alfred and Louise Powell and William de Morgan, and watercolours and prints by many leading Victorian artists, including a portrait of May Morris by Sir Edward Burne-Jones.

Because of the relatively small scale of the house, all visits will be by guided tour and must be booked in advance. Tours are available at 10:30 a.m., 12:00 and 2:00 p.m., for parties of up to eight people, on Thursdays and Fridays, and last about one hour. The cost is £10.00 per person. For tour bookings and general information please contact Sue Bright on 020 8741 4104 or admin@emerywalker.org.uk. The Emery Walker Trust has a website at www.emerywalker.org.uk.

PHS Grants in Printing History for 2008

The Printing Historical Society is pleased to continue its limited number of small grants for the fourth year. Grants are available in support of research on topics relating to the history of printing, and for publishable reports on archives relating to printing history.

The following specific areas of research are eligible: 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 offer a budget for 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.

The application should consist of: 1) a one-page covering letter, containing a brief *curriculum vitae* and the name, address and e-mail of one referee (who has agreed to serve as referee); and 2) a one- or two-page description of the project and budget. The project description should state its purpose clearly and succinctly. Please note that your compliance with these instructions will form part of our evaluation of the application, so be certain not to go beyond three pages of hard copy. Post your application to the PHS Grants and Prizes Sub-Committee, Peggy Smith, 18 Market Hill, Clare, Sudbury CO10 8NN, UK; e-mail can be used for questions, but not for submitting the application: m.m.smith@reading.ac.uk. Application deadline: 1 January 2008. Awards will be announced at the PHS AGM in April, for disbursement in May.

Friends of St Bride: Chairman's Report

Rob Banham

The Friends have had a fantastic year. The contemporary book-design conference and the annual conference were enormously successful – 120 people attended the book-design event and over 150 were at the annual conference. It was marvelous to see the Bridewell Hall and Bridewell Theatre packed full of people, and we had extremely positive feedback from the delegates. It was a real pleasure to work with the St Bride Foundation in organising these events, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Foundation staff and all the Friends who contributed – especially Ben Weiner and Catherine Dixon who gave a lot of their free time to organising these events.

I also need to thank Catherine for her continuing hard work in putting together the hugely varied and inspirational programme of talks and exhibi-

tions which continues to go from strength to strength. Unfortunately changing circumstances at the Library mean that the number of exhibitions will be drastically reduced next year, but rest assured that the lecture programme will continue. The introduction of our new journal, *Ultrabold*, has been a real triumph and we are hugely indebted to Simon Loxley for his brilliant work in editing and designing it.

And there is more to come. We are collaborating with the University of Reading on a two-day conference on non-Latin typeface design which will take place on 18 and 19 September. Fiona Ross, Rathna Ramanathan and Jo De Baerdemaeker are curating exhibitions at both locations which feature a huge amount of previously unseen material. Plans for next year's annual conference are already under way. Visit www.stbride.org for the call for papers. Also in the planning stage are more one-day conferences – watch this space!

Although the events are going well we still need to increase our membership numbers. The Friends have a very small committee and it would be great to find some volunteers to help us with recruitment. We hope to introduce membership cards soon and give members discounts on lectures and conferences. Together with two issues of *Ultrabold* and four of *Printing History News* we think this represents extremely good value for a £30.00 annual membership. St Bride Library needs the revenue that Friends membership money brings in, and a larger body of Friends would also help to attract more money from other sources.

I would like to end on a more positive note by announcing that, largely due to the income from conferences, the Friends of St Bride Library are donating £5,000 towards the cost of new rolling shelving for the Library. We hope you will agree that this is suitable use of Friends income which will be of direct benefit to the Library's users.

New PHS Secretary

The Printing Historical Society is very pleased to welcome Rathna Ramanathan as Secretary. Rathna is a graduate of Central St Martin's, where she now teaches, and has recently received her doctorate from the University of Reading. She is also a working designer, and runs Minus 9 Design, with branches in London and Chennai, India.

NPHT News

The National Printing Heritage Trust has recently made a grant to Craven Museum and Gallery for the refurbishment of a Britannia printing press of the 1850s. It is hoped to include a full report on the work in a future issue of *Printing History News*.

Changes of address. Could individuals and institutions please inform Derek Nuttall, Langdale, Pulford Lane, Dodleston, Chester CH4 9NN, of changes in either address or the person to whom PHN should be addressed, please.

Membership cards will not be issued to Friends of the NPHT in future, as most subscriptions are now made by bankers' orders.

BOOKS BOUGHT

John Trevitt is setting up (again) as an internet bookseller. He is seeking books about books (typography, printing, publishing history and illustration) but finds it hard to turn away good books on any subject. Contact John Trevitt, Rose Cottage, Church Road, Weobley, Hereford HR4 8SD. Tel: 01544 318388. E-mail: jj@trevitt.freemove.co.uk.

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