

Printing History News

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

Number 18 † Spring 2008

EVENTS

'The machine that made us: Gutenberg's brilliant invention'

Tuesday 6 May, 18:30–20.00 p.m., in the Conference Centre at the British Library. The Library has released the following statement about this event:

'Johann Gutenberg's printing press, which brought about the dawn of mass communication, is of barely equalled significance in the development of human culture. His achievement reached its pinnacle with the printing of the Gutenberg Bible, completed in 1455.

'A new documentary, *The machine that made us*, presented by Steven Fry, is due to be screened on BBC4 in Spring 2008, and excerpts will feature in the event of 6 May. For the programme, and in order to unravel mysteries of Gutenberg's technique, a team of experts built a unique copy of his press [see *PHN* 16]; watch it in action at the event, alongside discussion of the remarkable story behind the invention. Speakers include Alan May (printing expert and press builder), Martin Andrews (University of Reading) and Patrick McGrady (Wavelength Films). Price £6.00 (concessions £4.00).'

Oxford Guild of Printers' Wayzgoose

The Oxford Guild of Printers will hold its biannual 'Wayzgoose', a fair for printers and collectors of fine printing, at the Langdale Hall, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 6AB, on Saturday 5 July 2008, 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is free. Stalls will be held by fine and private press printers, specialist booksellers, and suppliers of type, paper and other printing sundries; printers will also be selling second-hand type and printing equipment. Witney is easily accessible by car or bus from Oxford, and there is ample parking in the town centre, where there are also numerous places to eat and

shop (including antique and book shops). For more information, or to book a stall, please contact Paul W. Nash, 8 Fairfield Drive, Witney, Oxon. OX28 5LB. Tel: 01993 774130. E-mail: paul.w.nash@virgin.net

PHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2008

As announced in *PHN* 17 the AGM of the Printing Historical Society will take place on Tuesday 22 April at 5:00 p.m. at the St Bride Library. It will follow the first day's programme of the 2008 Conference 'Hot metal to hot keys' (see below). PHS members are welcome, whether or not attending the Conference. Recipients of the 2007 round of PHS grants will be announced.

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 Library, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London EC4Y 8EE on 22 and 23 April 2008. Day one will cover the social, technical and commercial repercussions of the demise of letterpress and its resurrection as flexography; the maturing of lithography as a major process; web offset versus photo-gravure; and 'electronics', the new word that changed Fleet Street for ever. Day two will be a heady mix of film and fact. Speakers will focus on the change from manual typesetting to photo-composition and the problems of specification and design. Letraset, with a short but merry life, eased the work of graphic artists and played an important part in the period between manual setting and WYSIWYG. Talks will be interspersed with related films. Tickets are £50.00 per day or £90.00 for the full conference. The price for PHS members is £35.00 per day or £65.00 for both days. A limited number of student places are also available at the members' rates. The Donald Milham Award

will be presented at the conference, and the details of next year's Award, with increased prize-money, will be announced (entry forms will be available at the conference). To book please contact Rob Clayton at P. O. Box 4119, Wells BA5 2UF. E-mail: frobson@mbzonline.net.

St Bride Conference

Seeking inspiration: creative thinking around the design process. The seventh annual Friends of St Bride Library Conference will be held at St Bride Library, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London, on 15 and 16 May 2008.

How do designers gain inspiration and how can we find more? For many of us, inspiration seems elusive. But we recognise the 'eureka!' moment when it strikes and opens up new creative possibilities in our thinking and work. These may be the most pleasurable and effective moments in our design careers. Reflective designers try to find the patterns and factors that will make creative lightning strike more often. For some, simply taking a leisurely walk is enough stimulation to synthesize ideas and discover a promising way forward. Speakers include Karel Martens, Jake Tilson, Tyler Moorehead, Jeremy Tankard, Rian Hughes, Paul Antonio, William Hall and Sarah de Bondt. For more details, or to book a place, see the website at www.stbride.org/friends.

St Bride Lecture

The Universal Samaritan? – Emery Walker and his house in Hammer-smith Terrace, by Aileen Reed. To be held at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday 30 April at St Bride. Sir Emery Walker (1851–1933), the co-founder of the Doves Press, was a key figure in the private press movement and a pioneer of cutting-edge techniques of photo-reproduction. He was an intimate friend of William Morris, Philip Webb and Bernard Shaw, and a significant

figure in the wider 'arts and crafts' and Socialist movements. These aspects of his life are still evident at 7 Hammersmith Terrace, his home for the last thirty years of his life. The talk offers an introduction to Walker's life, and a look at his home which, with its William Morris, Cotswold and North African furnishings, is the best-preserved arts and crafts interior in Britain.

Aileen Reid works for English Heritage as an historian on the Survey of London. Since 2001 she has also been curator at 7 Hammersmith Terrace, where she catalogued the contents and oversaw the opening of the house to the public for the first time in 2005.

French 'Moderne'

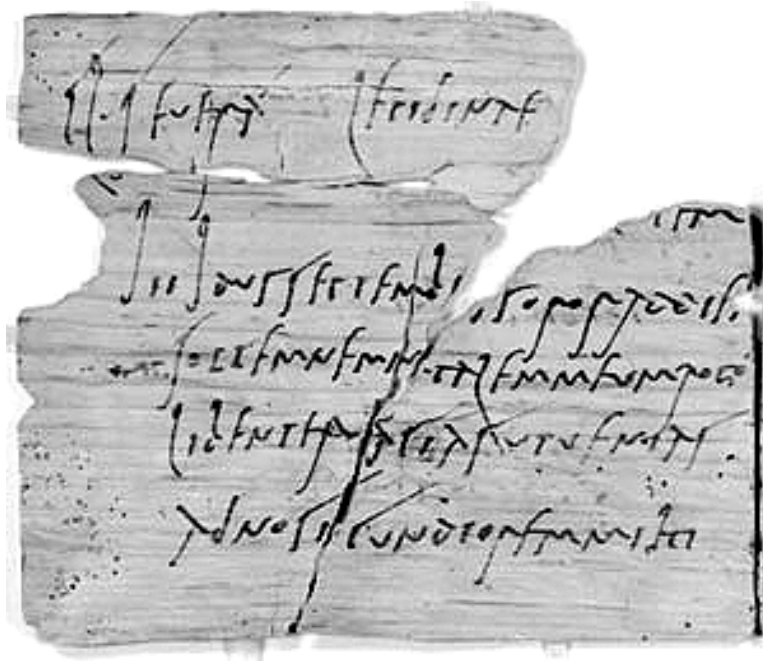
French 'Moderne': graphic arts in France 1920-1939, an exhibition curated by Ann Pillar, remains open (9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday) until 30 May 2008 at the Department of Typography and Graphic Communication at the University of Reading.

DRUPA and Comprint

W. P. Jaspert

Was it really that long ago? I was there – and I hope I shall be there again. I am referring to DRUPA, the international graphic arts show for print and paper held in Düsseldorf, Germany, since 1951. To visit it when it re-awakened the traditions of the pre-war Bugra Show of Leipzig (then beyond the Iron Curtain), seemed a brave undertaking. Germany itself was – at the time – not a country the world wanted to visit. Some later mainstay exhibitors must have felt the same. They chose not to exhibit but, after the success of the first exhibition, slowly trickled back, and by the time the third event was staged in 1958 were back in force. I had a job in general trade and publishing then, but took my holiday and went on my own account to Düsseldorf. Since then I have attended every show.

The courage and persistence of Dr Hubert Sternberg – the chief of the reborn Heidelberg company – made the show a success. He pushed on with sponsorship at a time when Germany was shunned by many other nations. New technology was introduced and most of the world's major printing equipment suppliers held the launch of



One of the Vindolanda tablets, a wooden 'leaf' with writing in ink

innovative products back until the next DRUPA. Old enemies in World War II, which had ended only a few years before, met again or even for the first time. The show became a truly international event. Even those who had initially shunned it came to realize that DRUPA was a must, despite the existence of regional events which saved on travelling costs. DRUPA became perhaps too big, but still a 'must-be-there' exhibition. Indian visitors had played a major role in gaining an international reputation for the event, Japan followed this lead, and even China joined. Despite having lost the standing of the local Bugra, the former East German printing machinery manufacturers joined the exhibitors.

Traditional technology was overtaken, or at least greatly influenced, by electronics and the computer. New technology was spawned. The grand old names either learned to adapt or disappeared.

I miss the pioneers of new technology – Dr Rudolf Hell, John Crosfield*, Dr Bolza-Schünemann, Efi Arazi and others, including those great salesmen like Eric Tanzer of Britain, Hans Mueller of Switzerland and Ari Rosenfeld of Israel, and his compatriot super-orator Berni Landa. Some are still on the scene, like that ex-Swede Lars Janneryd or the just-now-part-retired Martin Lange of Germany.

* Crosfield will be the subject of one of the talks at this year's PHS Conference (see page 1).

Parallel to DRUPA, other major international conferences have sprung up. Foremost – in my view – is Comprint, held every four years. Originally an American concept, that conference event was successfully moved to Europe at the initiative of Reto Conzett in Switzerland and Scandinavian printers (at that time European leaders in new technology applications). It gained the support of publishers worldwide and brought printers, publishers and advertisers together. Government ministers and think-tank innovators addressed the conference delegates. Japan began to play an important role, and India joined.

I am glad to have supported both events right from the start. The next DRUPA will be held at Düsseldorf between 29 May and 11 June 2008 (see www.drupa.de). The next Comprint is due in 2010.

Vindolanda: a very unscientific speculation

Julius Stafford-Baker

I was taught, like most of my generation in the printing trade, that first came Roman majuscules, and that poor calligraphy down the centuries, by a process of degradation, produced the minuscules to accompany them. We were even shown diagrams to illustrate stages of that degradation.

For any old printer a visit to the archaeological dig and the writing tablets found at Vindolanda (see opposite) is a revelation, not only exploding the rubbish we were taught about the origins of lower case letter-forms, but also indicating that a conscious 'display size' of lettering was used for the address on the outside of tablets. One grasps that the Roman postal service was not only Empire wide, but that parcels could also be dealt with. Mail did not have to be of a military nature, and could be from civilian relatives within the Province as well. One can see the influence of several writing 'styles', much as one can in the rival writing-masters' pattern-books of the seventeenth century. I was amazed to find that slaves in quite lowly occupations around 100 AD could read and write passable Latin, and wrote to each other.

However, there is one item amongst the other objects found which set me thinking. There have been found a large number of stave planks, originally parts of barrels, used to despatch goods to the far north, sometimes from outlying parts of the Empire. These have sometimes been branded with the name of the producer or shipper – burnt into the wood that is, presumably with metal branding-irons, probably of bronze, with the lettering reversed. A scholar in Spain, Dr Elise Marlière of the University of Barcelona, has been examining these, finding a distribution, likely for wine exports, covering an area from Marseilles to Mainz. Many exporters, means many, many barrels, and many branding-irons, which would have had to be made by someone, likely a specialist. Could sand-casting have been used, rather than some form of metal cutting? There has been a good deal of speculation in the last few years about the possible use of sand-casting for the creation of the earliest movable types at Mainz. A sample stave in the museum at Vindolanda uses letterforms curiously like 36-point Bembo capitals. Over to the experts ...

OBITUARY

Jeremy Winkworth

David R. Winkworth 1929–2007. Members of the NPHT will be saddened to learn of the death of my father on 28 December 2007. He had recently undergone an amputation and was recovering from the operation at the Coker-mouth Cottage Hospital when he passed away.



COMMON PRESS MODELS

Alan May

The two models on the right (above) were made in November 2007 for Le Musée des Arts et Métiers in Paris. They are for an exhibition about Benjamin Franklin which is currently on show there. The one on the left I made simply as a means of learning more about the common press, but it has since proved very useful as a visual aid. All three are based on the drawings which appear in *The common press* published by the Merrion Press in 1978, and are about quarter scale. All their mechanisms work but I have not tried to print with any of them as they would almost certainly not survive the attempt.

David was born in Sidcup, Kent on 9 June 1929 and spent his formative years in London, Cambridge and Norfolk. He went to work in Bahrain in the 1950s and bought his first Adana 8 x 5 and took it with him. The printing bug bit and after a stint working in Ecuador in the Oil Industry he returned to the UK. In 1967 David and my mum set up the New Bookshop and, having settled near Coker-mouth, bought the current family home.

The idea of a printing museum started in 1979 with the purchase of a largely derelict building next to Wordsworth's birthplace. Many items of printing significance were gathered, initially locally and then nationally. By 1993 a purpose-built building was completed and the Printing House Museum opened its doors to the public. A fine collection of hand presses and David's special interest, the Linotype, were finally on show to the paying public. Many old hands from the print

trade, comps and minders, lino and mono men, all paid their respects to what had been preserved. Their comments in our collection of visitors' books say it all.

David particularly enjoyed the acquisition and collection of new objects and welcomed printing donations of all kinds with open arms. He was still talking of all the things he had to do while in hospital and a great list was drawn up, sadly unfulfilled. He was also committed to the promotion and well-being of Coker-mouth, being a member of the Chamber of Trade, Civic Trust and Rotary Clubs. He founded the Coker-mouth Festival in 1981 and actively supported many local events. A dedicated family man, he enjoyed travelling and spending time with his family and grandchildren. The Museum is being kept on by the Printing House Museum Trust and family members, and we will decide in future what will become of it.

Printing Historical Society News

The PHS welcomes the following new members from 2007:

Mr R. O. Bradley, Chesham Bois
 Ms Linda Brownrigg, Los Altos Hills, USA
 Mr A. J. Clarke, Cardiff
 Mr D. C. Gladwell, Ellingham
 Mr J. Lavagnino, London
 Mr P. Milham, Stockport
 Ms L. J. Mohin, London
 Mr R.S. Nelson, Ellicott City, USA
 Dr L. M. M. Newman, Surbiton
 Ms R. Ramanathan, London
 Mr B. Reynolds, Aynho
 Mr M. G. Shew, Haydon Wells
 Mr M. Gray, Marlborough

Journal of the Printing Historical Society

Journal 11 should reach UK members by the end of March, early April at the latest. It has been too long a wait, and the new editor, John Trevitt, modestly shoulders most of the blame while at the same time looking forward to the appearance of an unusually long *Journal* containing three important articles, two of which have colour illustrations, and the usual diversity of reviews.

The *Journal* welcomes articles on the history – recent and distant – of printing, typesetting, bookbinding and allied subjects, including typefounding, inkmaking, papermaking, type-design, illustration and typographical design, and on the literature of all these trades.

While books are the natural focus for printing history, studies of other forms of printing are welcome. The editor does not lay down rules as to the length of articles; as guidance he suggests 3,000–20,000 words, the equivalent of 6–40 printed pages. Illustrations are welcome, and will be well printed by our printers, Henry Ling Ltd of Dorchester.

Every article offered to the *Journal* is subjected to – and usually improved by – review by at least one leading scholar in the field. The editor is also a keen copy-editor.

The *Journal* regularly publishes a number of book reviews (over sixty in the last four issues), always hoping to swim abreast of the flood of books likely to be of interest to our members – and inevitably, given current interest

in typography and the ‘history of the book’, barely doing so.

The *Journal* will also feature extended review articles, in which a reviewer is given scope to build a longer article than usual around an important new book or group of books.

The editor, John Trevitt, may be contacted at jj@trevitt.freeseerve.co.uk, by telephone at 01544 318388, or at Rose Cottage, Church Road, Weobley, Hereford HR4 8SD. The *Journal*’s reviews editor, Dr Catherine Armstrong, is at c.m.armstrong@mmu.ac.uk or the Department of History and Economic History, Manchester Metropolitan University, Geoffrey Manton Building, Rosamond Street, Manchester M15 6LL.

Letterpress Website

Benjamin Brundell

Starting my letterpress journey in 2005, it struck me that many people were happy to pass information on to me by post or verbally – but I could find little on the internet relating to the history, maintenance and practical use of British printing machines. I wanted to correct this, to help new printers with the basics and start novices on the road to learning more about their machines. My website – britishletterpress.co.uk – was launched in March 2007. Since then, 5,100 visitors (more than sixty per cent from the UK) have viewed nearly 30,000 pages.

Looking ahead, I want to offer more people the opportunity to publish their work on British letterpress, ranging from personal experiences to learned articles about specific presses and people. Can you offer an insight into a facet of letterpress printing? Would you share your account of how you became involved in letterpress? I would love to be able to present as much information as possible on the website, to inspire and help new and experienced letterpress printers. You can e-mail me at ben@britishletterpress.co.uk or write to Ben Brundell, 6 Heathfield Rise, Rishworth, Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire HX6 4RS.

Fell Queries

Martyn Thomas continues his research into Oxford’s ‘Fell’ types, and raises two queries which *PHN* readers might be able to help with:

- 1 Why did Sarah Prideaux buy a sizeable fount of Fell from Oxford in 1903, and what happened to it?
- 2 What happened to the two cases of Fell English that Francis Meynell had at the Romney Street Press and which he still had in the 1930s?

If you can help, please write to Martyn Thomas at Holly Lawn, Prospect Place, Bath BA2 4QP, or e-mail him at: martyn@thomas-associates.co.uk.

SMALL ADS

FOR SALE: a Cropper-type treadle press, made by F. M. Weiler around 1880 (in good condition, but needs new rollers), plus a large fount of 14-point Pastonchi, some 10-point Pastonchi, Perpetua titling and other faces, in cabinets. Offers around £300 for the lot, please. Transport to be negotiated. Please contact Angela Sutton, 30 Grundys Lane, Malvern Wells, Worcestershire WR14 4HS. Tel: 01684 575731. E-mail: acpsutton@rya-online.net. (Apologies for having printed an erroneous e-mail address in *PHN* 17. An article concerning this make of press was included in the *PHS Journal*, New Series 10, 2007, pp. 23–44).

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