

Printing History News

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

Number 21 † Winter 2008



Ulverstonian press discovered at the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney

Rare press discovered

When the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, Australia, published a picture of a 'Wharfedale' press on its website, it attracted the attention of Brian Aldred of the Otley Museum, who was planning a tour of printing museums in Australia and New Zealand. The Wharfedale was invented by David Payne of Otley whilst working for William Dawson. Their first press, a 'stop-cylinder' machine with a travelling bed that could deliver printed sheets without having to be stopped, was made in 1858. It was a crucial innovation and revolutionised the printing industry. Dawson and Payne did not take out a patent, with the result that their machine was widely copied. By the turn of the century seven firms in Otley were manufacturing Wharfedales and exporting them all over the world. Production continued until the 1980s. One of the earliest machines is on show at Otley Museum.

The Powerhouse Museum was keen to show Brian its machine and pick his brains. However, it turned out not to be a Wharfedale, but a very rare 'Ulverstonian', manufactured by Dawson

and Payne for its designer, Stephen Soulby of Ulverston, Cumbria, from 1854. They produced more than fifty such machines, during which time David Payne modified and improved the design. The press in Sydney is thought to have been sent there by Furnival's of Reddish, Cheshire, and was acquired by the museum in 1981.

EVENTS

Justin Howes Memorial Lecture

The fourth annual Justin Howes Memorial Lecture will be given by Hendrik D. L. Vervliet of Antwerp, on Tuesday 24 February 2009, at St Bride. The title of the lecture remains to be announced, but the subject will be Parisian types of the Renaissance.

St Bride Events

'*Short run*': *experimental book design and little London presses*, lecture (Thursday 15 January) and exhibition (Monday 12 to Friday 30 January 2009).

The form of the book: a one-day conference on book design, to be held at

St Bride on Friday 30 January 2009, 10:00 a.m.–5.30 p.m. The conference brings together highly acclaimed graphic designers, design critics and design historians to discuss various aspects of book design. Themes such as materiality, typographic detailing, design historiography, artists' books, methods of production, and design ideology run throughout the day, in an exciting line-up of international speakers, including Chrissie Charlton, Jenny Eneqvist, Roland Früh, Corina Neuenschwander, James Goggin, Sarah Gottlieb, Richard Hollis, Mevis and Van Deursen and Catherine de Smet. The organisers are Sara De Bondt and Fraser Muggeridge.

Full rate: £60.00 (£50.00 for Friends of St Bride Library). *Students and over 60s*: £30.00 (£25.00 for Friends of St Bride Library). Book online at www.stbride.org (where further details can be found) or call 0207 353 3331. Please book early to guarantee a place.

PHS AGM

The 2009 Annual General Meeting of the Printing Historical Society will be held in early March 2009. The date and speaker will be posted on the PHS website six weeks in advance; anyone needing written notice should contact the Secretary by 15 January 2009.

Print Networks

Call for papers and Conference Fellowship

Print Networks, the twenty-seventh annual conference on the history of the British book trade, will take place at Trinity Hall, Cambridge University, on 28–30 July 2009. Papers are invited on any aspect of the production, distribution and reception of print and manuscript in Great Britain. Provincial-metropolitan inter-trade connections will be acceptable, as will aspects of trade relations with any part of the

former colonies and dominions. The theme of the 2009 conference will be 'Collectors, Librarians and the Book Trade', so papers within that area are encouraged, although others will be considered. The papers presented will be considered for publication as part of the *Print Networks* series, published jointly by the British Library and Oak Knoll Press. Papers should be of up to thirty minutes duration. An abstract (of around 300 words) of the offered paper and a brief CV (no longer than one side of A4 in total) should be submitted by 31 January 2009 to Lucy Lewis at lcho8@aber.ac.uk.

The guest speaker will be Ann Thwaite, Whitbread Award-winning biographer. She will speak on Edmund Gosse, author of *Father and son* and sometime Librarian of the House of Lords.

The Print Networks conference also offers two annual Fellowships to scholars whose research falls within the parameters of the Conference's brief, and who wish to present papers at the conference. The fellowships cover the cost of attending the conference and some assistance towards costs of travel. A detailed submission of the research being undertaken accompanied by a letter of recommendation from a tutor or supervisor should be sent to Lucy Lewis by 31 January 2009.

Designer Bookbinders lecture series

Unless otherwise noted, the following events will be held at the Art Workers Guild, 6 Queen Square, London WC1 at 6:30 p.m. Admission is £2.50 for students, £5.00 for members and £7.00 for non-members. Season tickets are also available for four lectures at £9.00 for students, £18.00 for members and £26.00 for non-members (or for all eight lectures in the annual series the prices are £18.00, £36.00 and £52.00 respectively). The nearest tube stations are Holborn and Russell Square. The organizers, Rachel Ward-Sale and Julia Dummett, welcome ideas for future lectures or any suggestions for improvements to the format of the series. Please telephone 01273 486718 or e-mail lectures@designerbookbinders.org.uk.

Study day, Saturday 10 January 2009. Consists of the following events: 10.30 a.m. Ewan Clayton, *The written artefact as a contemplative space*. In this talk, which features a number of projects made in collaboration with



Peter Jones, Ewan explores his thinking about the place hand-work has in a digital age and its importance in our lives. 12:00 noon. Jenni Grey, *Design basics: adopting contemporary design tools and processes in your work and as a way of life*. 2:00 p.m. Simon Brett, wood-engraver, *The painful adventures of Pericles, Prince of Tyre*. Simon will talk about his collaboration with the Barbarian Press on an edition of Shakespeare's *Pericles*, and their attempt to combine text and illustration meaningfully. 3:30 p.m. Maureen Duke, *A longlife binder: experience and experiences*.

A bookbinder's approach to book arts: how I incorporate design-binding techniques in book arts and why I am involved in making artists' books, lecture by Eri Funazaki, Tuesday 3 February.

A bookbinder's journey: from student days to post-Fellowship, lecture by Dominic Riley, Tuesday 3 February 2009. Dominic will describe his travels, his teaching and working life in America, his adventures in the Lake District, unusual requests he has received, strange bindings he has known, interesting folk he has met along the way, and a little TV.

Katharine Adams, her life and work: an account of England's foremost woman binder in the early twentieth century, the Middleton Lecture, by Dr Marianne Tidcombe, Tuesday 3 March 2009. Adams was at the centre of the Arts and Crafts movement and bound books for the leading private presses and major collectors.

PRINTING A VERY LARGE LINOCUT

Richard Lawrence

Stanley Donwood, artist to the band Radiohead, conceived the idea of producing a very large linocut of Fleet Street (reproduced above), to be printed at St Bride, with part of the print-run being donated to the St Bride Library. Inspiration, as the reader may detect, comes from the style of illustration to be found in the 'Nuremberg Chronicle' of 1493. Armed with the platen size of the large Albion press in the Exhibition Room at St Bride, Stanley duly cut two pieces of linoleum to the maximum possible size, the two halves to be registered so as to produce one very large print. Having encouraged this endeavour, I was left with the problem of printing it.

Three sessions ensued. The first, attended appropriately enough by gentlemen of the press and a photographer, was in March. Using the old method of press-points (affixed to the packing) it proved possible to achieve reasonably good register between the halves. The main problems were how to get a decent impression with such a large inked area and what to do with the other half of the sheet as each half of the image was printed. For the first session a sheet of camping mat (dense and resilient polyurethane foam) was added to the packing to even out the impression. This worked well, but overfilled the gap between bed and platen, and the cloth girth – the strap pulling the bed under the platen – broke. Much man-handling of the bed ensued (the girth was later mended with a stout piece of old shirt and thread).

The second session in July was held in the machine-room next to the new Library reading room, using the Albion there. This is a more free-running machine and actually has a slightly larger platen and a better fitting frisket. It proved much easier to operate. A piece of thick blanket, intended for use in an etching press, but selected as the traditional packing material (see Moxon) was substituted for the camping mat, and all ran very smoothly with the production of some forty prints in a day. A method to deal with the unprinted half of the sheet was also perfected. The lino was positioned so that the unprinted half sheet fell on the operating side of the machine. Once the tympan, frisket and paper were folded down onto the bed, the projecting half of the sheet was rolled into a tube in a sheet of scrap paper. This tube could then be passed between the platen and the upright of the staple as the bed was wound in, without fear of damaging or soiling the projecting part of the sheet.

By the third session in September we had it all down to a fine art and produced another fifty prints with plenty of time to take 'tea' afterwards in a nearby hostelry.

Besides the efforts of Mr Donwood and myself, Kim Vousden (a volunteer at St Bride) deserves thanks for perfecting the inking required using a two-handed roller. Prints are now on sale from Stanley Donwood's website at www.slowlydownward.com, and from the St Bride Library. All proceeds from copies sold by the Library go to St Bride. Mr Donwood (and your correspondent) will most certainly use the proceeds from the other copies to purchase intoxicating liquor and frivolous items, so think carefully who you wish to support if you are going to purchase a copy. *Edition size:* 36 (St Bride) + 50 (Mr Donwood) + 10 artist's proofs. *Image size:* 25 x 38 inches on Somerset White archival paper (30 x 44 inches). *Price:* £750.00. A smaller facsimile, printed from a photo-etched metal plate, will be made available later at a more modest price.

Michael Twyman

Congratulations to Michael Twyman, who will be conferred with an honorary doctorate by the University of Reading on 13 December 2008, in recognition of his great (and ongoing) contribution to printing history and teaching.

Donald Milham, apprentice and journeyman Printer, 1915–2006

Peter Milham

Editor's note: This is the first part of a serialisation of Peter Milham's memoir of his father, in whose name the PHS has recently offered a prize for an essay on personal experiences 'in the print'.

My early memories of my Dad at work are of him leaving home early in the morning, having woken my brother and myself to get up for school, and then coming home late at night, tired and with his hands stained with the printing inks used that day. Like most children I never queried what my Dad's work entailed, but instead looked for the rewards in the form of pocket money and occasional off-cuts of paper and cardboard to play with. I was taken into the works occasionally on a Saturday morning, a fascinating experience for a nine-year-old, with all the sights and sounds of machine printing in the post-war period.

What was my Dad's career 'in the print'? When he died in 2006, and I was looking through some papers he had kept, I realised I had never discussed his career in depth with him and he had never attempted to record his work experiences. So this is his story, created from observations, glimpses taken from memories and diaries, and some research over the past two years. I have looked afresh at some of the printing memorabilia and books he owned, and at what he told me over the years, and have come to understand how happy and proud he was of what he had achieved.

Reading his papers led me to St Bride and the creation of the Donald Milham Award. For me, this award is about celebrating the working man in the British print industry. My thanks go to St Bride, the Printing Historical Society and Rob Clayton for their interest, endeavour and enthusiasm.

Dad's career, starting in 1930 and ending in 1986, spanned and echoed enormous changes in print technology, the printing business and working practices. He was employed in several of the UK's largest letterpress print works. Perhaps what makes the story most interesting is that my Dad stayed on the 'shop floor' and never aspired to roles in management or the trade union.

Donald Milham was born in Rochester on 3 January 1915, and completed his education at Gravesend



Donald Milham around 1932

grammar school. He was the middle of three sons. Don left school at the age of fifteen and his elder brother Jack helped him to get a seven-year apprenticeship, starting in October 1930, as a machine-minder at Amalgamated Press in Gravesend, at that time the largest letterpress printing company outside London. There was no family tradition in the print industry; Jack was in the Royal Navy.

The importance placed on his indenture is shown by its being printed on vellum. It is phrased in formal and almost arcane language, which would horrify a modern specialist in employment law, with phrases like 'doth put and bind himself a covenant Servant or Apprentice' and 'Serve the master, obey and perform all lawful commands and requirements, and keep his secrets'. As was usual, the deed was a formal agreement between employer, apprentice, and the apprentice's father.

As an apprentice in the 1930s Don earned about 14 shillings per week (around £28.00 at today's value). Earnings rose annually until, in his seventh year, he was earning 54 shillings a week (about £108.00 today). The working week of 48 hours was reduced to 45 hours at Amalgamated Press in 1938.

No doubt some education was given 'on the shop floor' in the ways of the master craftsman, where trial and error and good judgement were learned. Apprentices were allowed to attend day-release training, and gain printing industry qualifications. Don travelled up to the London School of Printing to learn his trade.

Part II will follow in a future issue.

Philip Wickens

A personal memoir by Peggy Smith

Philip Wickens, Honorary Secretary of the PHS until 2007, lost his battle with cancer on 10 November 2008. I met Philip when he enrolled as a first-year undergraduate in the Department of Typography and Graphic Communication at the University of Reading, where he took my course in the history of typography. He had left his career as an accountant in order to study typography, and although he was a good deal older than his fellow students, he fitted in very well. His love of ancient Egypt led him to set up the Thames Valley Ancient Egypt Society, which was soon thriving and actively promoting study. During his undergraduate study at Reading, Philip spotted the 'Palmer Papyrus', a thirteen-foot-long framed object that the Department kept as a specimen of ancient graphic communication, and he was instrumental in getting it cleaned and remounted by some of the best-known conservators of Egyptian art.

Some time after graduating, Philip agreed to serve as Secretary of the Society, and was a vital member of the organizing team for our conferences in 2002, 2004 and 2006. His services for over a decade as Secretary were many, and I hope he knew that his efforts were much appreciated. A fellow PHS Committee member, Martin Andrews, gave a short address at the funeral on 27 November.

Journal of the Printing Historical Society

New Series number 12 (Winter 2008) will be sent to members before the end of December. It contains a long article by Claire Bolton (of the Alembic Press) on impressions of cloths in surviving copies of Johann Zainer's fifteenth-century books, seemingly firm evidence for paper damping. Also included are articles on F. T. Wimble, 'ink manufacturer ... and Australian nationalist', by Benjamin Thorn; 'Wages in the printing trade in nineteenth-century Dublin' by Charles Benson; 'The wreck of the Bembo' by John Bell; and the usual eclectic mix of reviews by Catherine Armstrong, Elizabeth James, Richard Lawrence, Tim Reinke-Williams, Paul Shaw, Martyn Thomas and others.

PHS Chairmanship and Treasurership

The Printing Historical Society will reach its forty-fifth birthday in 2009. It has a publishing programme in hand, including the *History of the Monotype Corporation*, which will add to its proud history of publications, the *Journal*, the *Bulletin*, a series of books, both new monographs and reprints of classic texts, and *PHN* (with Friends of St Bride and the NPHT). Since 2000 a series of conferences have been held, and a programme of grants and prizes initiated. The Society is on a sound financial footing and has reserves for future publishing.

We need new blood to take over the roles of Chair and Treasurer. Both the current Chairman, Peggy Smith, and the Treasurer, Ken Brooks, have given notice that they will not stand for re-election when their current terms come to an end in 2010. Both have served for many years, Peggy as Chairman, sometime *Journal* editor and Secretary and Ken as Treasurer. Members are encouraged to contact Peggy with suggestions about who might be approached to consider standing for these offices. Both are honorary, and require a few hours a week. She and Ken would be happy to discuss the duties in detail with anyone interested. The Society has a general Committee and sub-committees on Publications (chaired by Paul W. Nash) and Grants and Prizes; Committee members share various tasks with the officers. Rathna Ramanathan is our Secretary.

New PHS members

The Printing Historical Society is pleased to welcome the following new members, who have joined during 2008:

Mr William Appleton, Quedgeley, Gloucestershire
 Mr R. Barton, Pudsey, Leeds
 Ms A. Callahan, New York City, U.S.A.
 Mr D. J. Clarke, Southgate, London
 Mr Christopher John Alban Collins, Burnt Oak, London
 Mr M. Edwards, Woodston, Peterborough
 Dr Brent Elliott, Harrow, Middlesex
 Mr T. W. Holder, Barwell, Leicester
 Caroline Holmes, London
 Helen Ingham, Luton, Bedfordshire
 Mr E. Law, Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny, Ireland

Mr R. Phillips, Beeston, Nottinghamshire
 Mr B. K. Rees, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire
 Mr R. M. Ritter, Grove, Oxfordshire
 Dr Fiona G. E. Ross, Swells Hill, Gloucestershire
 Mr B. Russell, Longden, Shrewsbury, Shropshire
 Dr B. Thorn, Armidale NSW, Australia
 Mr Gerard Jan Post van der Molen, Ruurlo, The Netherlands
 Mr C. Whitehouse, Dietlikon, Switzerland
 Ann-Marie Wyatt, Earlsdon, Coventry

Rampant Lions Press Sale

There will be a sale of printing equipment over the weekend of 24-25 January 2009, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at Swan House, 80 High Street, Over, near Cambridge. Randoms, type racks, galleys, type ornaments, spacing material and other composing-room equipment will be available, plus a 22-inch guillotine, book-press and some papers. A price list will be ready in early January. Please call Sebastian Carter on 01954 231003 or e-mail sebastianc@waitrose.com.

USEFUL CONTACTS

National Printing Heritage Trust
www.npht.org.uk
 Chair: Michael Twyman
lithomn@totalise.co.uk

Printing Historical Society
www.printinghistoricalsociety.org.uk
 Chair: Peggy Smith
m.m.smith@reading.ac.uk

Friends of St Bride Library
www.stbride.org
 Chair: Rob Banham
rob@stbride.org

St Bride Library, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London EC4Y 8EE
www.stbride.org
 Librarian: Nigel Roche
nigel@stbrideinstitute.org

Printing History News
 Editor: Paul W. Nash
 8 Fairfield Drive, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 5LB
paul.w.nash@virgin.net

Published by the NPHT, PHS and the Friends of St Bride Library, December 2008. Printed by Synergie, Birmingham.