

# Printing History News

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

Number 26 † Spring 2010

## EVENTS

### Printing Historical Society AGM

The 2010 Annual General Meeting of the Printing Historical Society will be held on Tuesday 27 April 2010 at 5:30 p.m. at the St Bride Foundation, London. Following the formal business, at 6:00 p.m., Dr John Hinks will speak on *Printing: a revolutionary history*.

### St Bride events

#### DIY Design

The Ninth Annual St Bride Library Conference, *DIY Design*, will be held at the St Bride Library on 27 and 28 May 2010. Contributors will include Mette D. Ambeck, Martin Andrews, Paul Antonio, Hudson Bec, Petr van Blokland, Mark Frith, Linzie Hunter, Helen Ingham, Michael Johnson, Ann Pillar, Teal Triggs and Wolfgang Weingart. Full price £120.00, concessions £50.00, Friends £90.00 / £35.00. Further details can be found on the website at [www.stbride.org](http://www.stbride.org).

In June, the Friends will hold a design auction and November will see a major letterpress event, a combined conference and book fair. Further details will be mounted on the Library website at [www.stbride.org](http://www.stbride.org).

### 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 Burford School, Cheltenham Road, Burford, Oxfordshire OX18 4PL, on Saturday 10 July 2010, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Admission is free. Stalls will be held by fine and private press printers, specialist booksellers, societies (including the Friends of St Bride) and suppliers

of type, paper and other printing sundries; printers will also be selling second-hand type and printing equipment.

Burford is easily accessible by car or bus from Oxford, and there is ample parking at the school. For those who do not know Burford, it is a charming Cotswold town, with numerous places to eat and shop (including antique shops). Some readers may recall the 2008 Wayzgoose, held (to considerable acclaim) at the nearby market-town of Witney. For more information, or to book a stall, please contact Louisa Hare, Old Park Cottage, Winderton Road, Lower Brailes, Oxfordshire OX15 5JB. Tel: 01608 685924. E-mail: [louisa.hare@btinternet.com](mailto:louisa.hare@btinternet.com).

## NEW BOOKS

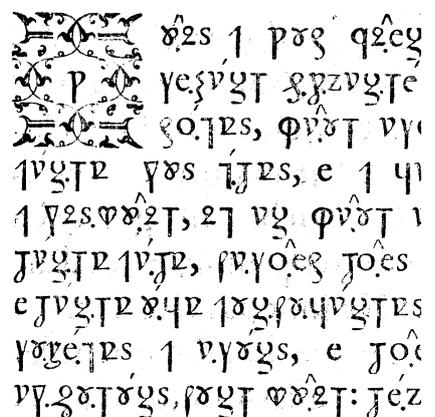
### OXFORD COMPANION TO THE BOOK

The latest in Oxford University Press's series of *Oxford companions* is *to the book*, edited by Michael F. Suarez and Henry R. Woudhuysen. Published in February, it consists of two volumes bound in quarter red leather, and contains a series of essays, followed by an encyclopaedia of publishing and printing history, including much on type, printing processes and machinery, paper and its manufacture, editorial practices, publishing, book-collecting, libraries, book-illustration and binding. There are numerous biographical entries for important figures in these areas, notably for publishers, printers and artists.

The *Companion* contains around a million words, compiled by some 400 contributors, including many names which will be familiar to readers of *PHN*, such as Martin Andrews, Nicolas Barker, Sebastian Carter, Christopher de Hamel, Mirjam Foot, Lotte Hellinga, John Hinks, John Lane, James Mosley, Paul W. Nash, David Pearson and Peggy Smith.

Copies are available from the OUP at £175.00, although various deals and special offers (including some from the

publisher) are available, meaning that those interesting in acquiring the book should be able to find a better price. Or one could, of course, always borrow it from a library (see the entry on lending libraries, vol. 2, pp. 870–872), or consult it at the Bodleian (vol. 1, pp. 539–540).



Detail of the 'Rambaud' phonetic type (1578) from Hendrik Vervliet's new book (see below).

### FRENCH RENAISSANCE PRINTING TYPES

Hendrik D.L. Vervliet's *French Renaissance printing types: a conspectus* (London: Bibliographical Society and Printing Historical Society, and New Castle: Oak Knoll Press, 2010) has just been posted out free to all PHS members; it is in lieu of two of the issues of the *Journal* that the Society should have published since 2000.

### BOOK-MAKING AT DARTINGTON HALL

Mary Bartlett's *Inky rags: letterpress printing & bookbinding on the Dartington Hall Estate 1935–2010* (Buckfastleigh: Itinerant Press, 2010), has just appeared. Its production was aided by a PHS research grant. The copy sent to the PHS will be placed in the St Bride Library.

## The National Printing Heritage Trust: twenty years old (part II)

Derek Nuttall

*The first part of this account appeared in PHN 25 in December 2009.*

The formal launch of the Printing Heritage Trust was held at 11 Bedford Row, the office of the British Printing Federation, on the evening of Monday 13 April 1992. The event was well attended with some sixty people present. The main purposes of the launch were to publicize the Trust, to outline its aims and to encourage support, both materially and financially, from the industry, organisations and individuals who could become 'Friends of the NPHT' for the modest fee of £10.00 per year – a sum that has never been increased.

A great deal of preparation had taken place prior to the launch. Michael Passmore and Lawrence Wallis used their many contacts in the printing world to draw up a list of people to invite. The evening started at 6:30 with a short welcome from the Chairman, Michael Passmore, who was followed by Bamber Gascoigne, the Trust's Patron. After his speech, there were short talks by the members of a panel consisting of Michael Twyman, James Mosley and Lawrence Wallis. David Padbury of the BPIF then told the meeting about a 'time capsule' of printed specimens that had been compiled in 1953. The evening concluded with Michael Passmore outlining the aims of the Trust and what needed to be done in order to preserve for posterity the skills and technology that were rapidly disappearing. He showed a video, made by Oxford University Press, which recorded the hand-casting of metal types.

One of the first innovations after the launch was the publication of a *Newsletter*, starting in December 1992. Noted in this first issue was a list of the founder Trustees, who were: Gwyn Evans (director of an old-established printing firm); Rev. Dr Richard Hills (first director of Manchester Museum of Science and Industry and President of the Paper Historians' Association); E. Clifford James (Regional Manager of MANWEB); James Mosley (Librarian, St Bride Library, representing the Printing Historical Society); Miss Robin Myers (representing the Worshipful Company of Stationers and

Newspaper Makers); Dr Derek Nuttall (retired Head of Printing, Chester School of Art); Michael Passmore (retired Chairman of Passmore International); and Professor Michael Twyman (Department of Typography and Graphic Communication at Reading University).

In addition to the Trust's Patron, Bamber Gascoigne, Vice-Presidents nominated were William and Margaret Sessions (of York) and Mrs Whittaker (Peter's widow). From the start many people had offered their services or advice and to utilise them an Advisory Committee was established. The original members were: Dennis Arnold; Sebastian Carter; Rev. Eric Chambers; Roy Coxhead; Desmond Field; Alan Morris; Richard Russell; and Lawrence Wallis.

Although formed in the hope that a national museum of printing would result, several other objectives were pursued. One of these was to establish a close liaison with every museum in England and Wales that had any items connected with printing and its related trades. Valiant work on this was undertaken by Desmond Field (of the John Jarrold Museum, Norwich), who began to compile a database of museum holdings. This resulted in the *Directory*, published in 1997, with a revised edition in 2000. To extend the Trust's work with museums, approaches were made to inform and involve the Museums' Association and the Science Museum. A close relationship was formed with the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry, which acquired Peter Whittaker's fine collection of line-casters.

As the Trust's funds began to grow, it became possible to offer not just advice but also financial help to museums seeking grants to obtain, restore or display printing artefacts. To publicise this, over 100 museums and libraries, and a few other institutions, were added to the Trust's *Newsletter* mailing. The regular contact thus established elicited many responses and requests for help. Particular close contact was established with several private collections (some of which, sadly, no longer exist). These included: The Hot Metal Press, at Elsecar; The Printing House Museum, at Cockermouth; Amberley Chalk Pit Museum; and the William Clowes Museum, at Beccles.

One of the first instances of practical help was the restoration of the 'Atlas' hand-press at the Englesea Brook Museum of Primitive Methodism. The actual work was carried out by a

team of six enthusiastic Young Managing Printers from Lancashire under the leadership of Martin Kerry. A short video of the press in use after being restored can be seen by entering 'Englesea Brook' into an internet search engine. Another of the Trust's earliest achievements was the re-location and restoration of a large Columbian press for the Atkinson Art Gallery, Southport, in 1995. Regrettably, it has recently been made known that the Atkinson wishes to dispose of this fine press. Over the years many hand-presses have been restored into working order for various museums, including help with the renovation of a rare eighteenth-century wooden press for Chetham's Library, Manchester.

A further stimulus to get printers in the north of England interested in the NPHT was a lecture by Lawrence Wallis entitled 'A history of typographical composition', given at Manchester Metropolitan University in October 1993. About the same time, the Trust became involved in a campaign to save the Stephenson Blake Collection of punches, matrices etc., when the old-established typefoundry in Sheffield ceased production.

An unexpected outcome of the Trust's *Newsletter* was the establishing of links with similar bodies abroad, including the U.S.A., Canada, Ireland, Australia, Germany and New Zealand. As the remit of the Trust only applied to England and Wales, informal links were also forged with the Scottish Printing Archive Trust and the Robert Smail Printing Museum.

In July 1994, Friends of the NPHT, now numbering around 150, were invited to visit the new Oxford University Press Museum and the Alembic Press. Following the success of this double visit, others were arranged including to the Science Museum's storage warehouse, near Olympia, the British Library and the Type Museum. A different kind of event for Friends was an evening of films held at the National Film Library.

A great many enquiries began to be received from printers and others wanting to dispose of obsolete printing equipment as the demise of letterpress gained momentum, and one of the recurring tasks was to try to find suitable homes for some, at least, of the more interesting items, although sadly many artefacts that really should have been preserved ended up as scrap.

From its formation, the Trust's Chairman was Michael Passmore who,

in keeping with the Trust Deed, had to retire on reaching the age of seventy. He was succeeded by Michael Twyman, who is still Chairman. Through its history, the Honorary Treasurer has been Mr E. Clifford James, whilst I served as Honorary Correspondent and Editor of the *Newsletter* until 2002. In this year, the Trust's newsletter became part of a joint publication, that which you are now reading. Its first editor was Anita Phillips.

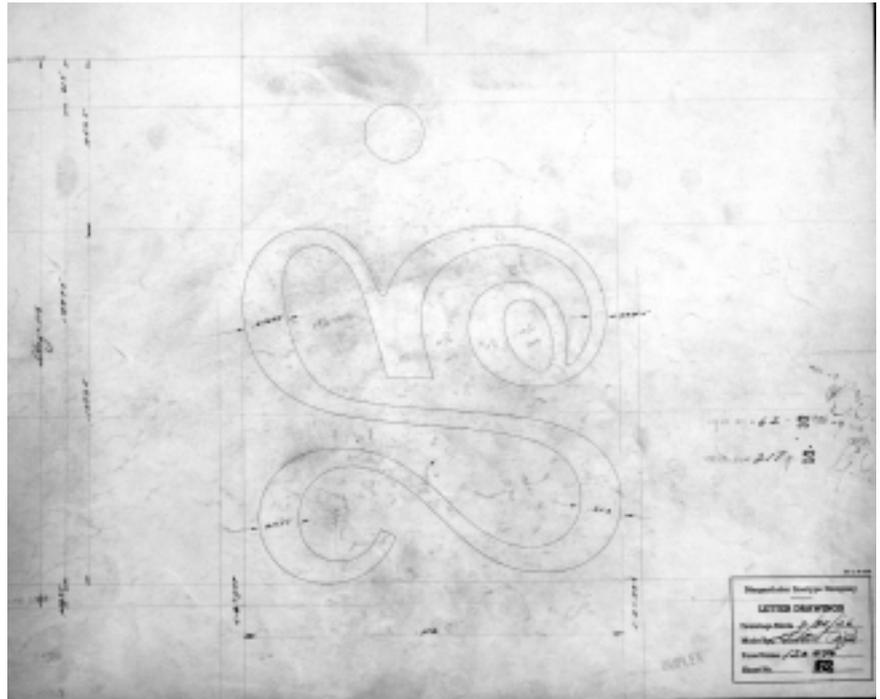
Although the Trust's funds have never reached a level which would permit large grants, many awards – usually in sums of between £200.00 and £1,000.00 – have been made to a range of museums, the most recent being a grant to the Printing Office at the Amberley Chalk Pit Museum.

Inevitably there have been many changes to both the Board of Trustees and the Advisory Committee over the years, and it would seem appropriate to conclude this article by listing the current members of these bodies. They are: *Trustees*: Martin Andrews; John Arnold; John Griffiths; E. Cliff James; Justin Knopp; John Liffen; Paul W. Nash; Steve Oram; Michael Twyman. *Advisory Committee*: Desmond Field; John Handford; Bradley Hotson; James Mosley; Ray Millington; Derek Nuttall; Michael Passmore; Nigel Roche; Richard Russell; Bernard Seward; Claire Seymour; Anthony Smith; John Spurgin; and Jeremy Winkworth.

## Tamil PHS project: a brief report

Fiona Ross

I am very pleased to report that, following receipt of a research grant from the Printing Historical Society, a large part of the proposed research project has been completed. The proposal was as follows: 'Research into the provenance and use of the 1936 Linotype hot-metal Tamil letter-drawings, with a detailed analysis of the designs, with reference to the peculiarities of the typefounding technology, and their legacy on subsequent Tamil typeforms. This will be accompanied by the digital capture of the letter-drawings of the text ('Light') weight to assist in the research and, perhaps more crucially, the preservation of the original drawings thereby providing improved accessibility for researchers in type history and a potential template for the further digital capture of non-Latin type drawings to create an enduring archive.'



*Hot-metal Linotype Tamil drawing, 1936, from the Non-Latin Collection at the Department of Typography and Graphic Communication, University of Reading*

To set this in context, the Tamil letter-drawings referred to above were produced by the Linotype Mergenthaler Company for hot-metal typesetting and comprise the oldest artefacts in the Non-Latin Collection of the Department of Typography and Graphic Communication at the University of Reading. This collection holds in excess of 10,000 letter-drawings in at least sixteen writing-systems that were designed for a variety of typesetting and printing technologies spanning most of the twentieth century.

I am glad to report that the digital capture\* of the 'Light' weight of drawings has been completed. Although not specified in the original research proposal, it was felt that it was worth spending additional time capturing the Tamil 'Bold' letter-drawings under the same conditions (identical camera settings, lighting, etc.) for the sake of completeness, and to preserve the second weight for the archive.

The images captured in digital format comprise: *Linotype Tamil Light*: 167 letterforms; one additional showing dimensions; one character set listing; *Linotype Tamil Bold*: 177 letterforms; one additional showing dimensions; one character set listing.

The project was undertaken using the Typography Department's camera,

\*This term is used rather than 'digitization', since the latter is often taken to mean one of the processes of digital font manufacture.

a Canon EOS 30D, and the images were adjusted in Adobe Photoshop to control positioning, size and degree of contrast to maintain uniformity across all letter-drawing images. The images have been preserved as Adobe Photoshop EPS files, CMYK, 72 dpi (2835 × 2324 pixels) on two sets of data discs (one set as a back-up copy), and have been uploaded to the Typography Department's server. These files will be converted by the Department's IT team to Adobe PDF files (screen optimized) for researchers to view as part of a digital letter-drawing archive. Access for researchers will be discussed and announced on the Typography Department's website ([www.reading.ac.uk/typography/about/typ-news.aspx](http://www.reading.ac.uk/typography/about/typ-news.aspx)) and the PHS will be directly informed.

This part of the research project was undertaken with the kind assistance of Jo De Baerdemaeker, to whom I am indebted for the technical information noted above. Also thanks are due to the Typography Department for the loan of equipment and to its IT team for technical assistance.

The research into the provenance and use of the Tamil hot-metal letter-drawings is on-going, and research findings will be written up in an article later in the year.

I would like to thank the PHS for funding this research and enabling the preservation of these historic letter-drawings.

## New officers for the PHS

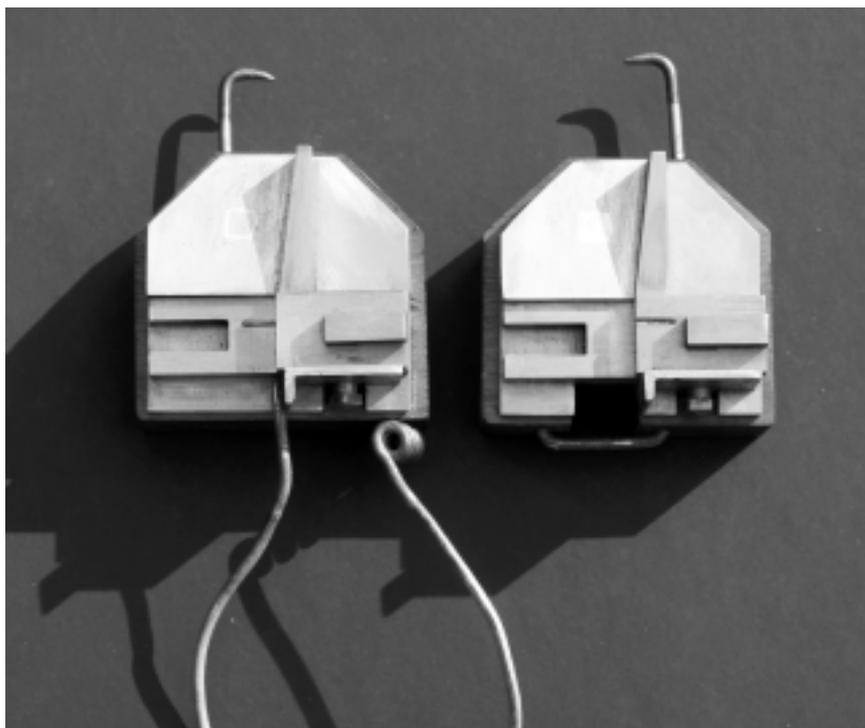
At the 2010 AGM (see page 1) the Printing Historical Society will elect officers to replace Peggy Smith (Chairman), Ken Brooks (Treasurer), and Rathna Ramanathan (Secretary), who are retiring. The office of Membership Secretary will be filled separately from the Treasurership, and we hope also to appoint a Web-master. We always encourage attendance at the AGM, and this year we offer a most promising lecture afterwards: Dr John Hinks on *Printing: a revolutionary history*. Light refreshments will follow.

## Replicas of Moxon's type mould

Alan May

My first attempt at making a type mould based on Joseph Moxon's description was undertaken mainly to try and get a better insight into his account than was possible by just reading through it. Actually making the thing was useful, as it highlighted a number of omissions in the drawings and clarified several features which I had not previously understood. In particular the purpose of the odd T-shaped projections on the bottom of each register became clear. A full account of my reconstruction was published in the *Printing Historical Society Bulletin* (no. 40) in 1996.

This first attempt had a number of shortcomings. The workmanship was somewhat rudimentary and the jet in particular was unsatisfactory. Moxon gives no indication of the angle of slope for this part so I had to make a guess based on his drawings. The result was a jet which was far too wide. At that time I was also unable to understand Moxon's drawing of the register-retaining screws but recently I took another look at these and suddenly realised what he was attempting to depict. The shape of these screws is a very small and unimportant point, but it is so nice to find an answer after fourteen years. This first mould has been used over the years as a visual aid to explain the type-casting process to students and it occurred to me recently that others too might find a mould of use in their teaching. This thought coincided with my learning about the process of metal cutting using lasers. Could I use this process to cut out the blanks for a type mould? The answer was yes, but there were also a



*'Moxon' type mould made by Alan May*

number of drawbacks. The first was that because minimum charges were involved, I had to make at least five sets of parts. Also because the blanks have been burned out they have edges which are hardened and quite difficult to clean up so that the time saved in cutting out parts has to be offset by the extra time needed in finishing. The picture above shows one of the completed moulds. Each comes in its own box together with a sample matrix, a trial casting and a small ladle.

## PAPERBACK REPRINTS

John Trevitt

The owners of mass-market paperback titles (Penguin, Fontana (Collins), Pan, Granada etc.) finding that after, say, five years sales – even of the most popular titles – dropped off, regularly 'rested' them, and brought them back after a few years with new covers. While they were resting on one publisher's list it was common for another mass-market publisher to negotiate a short-term lease of the paperback rights. During the era when such paperbacks were printed by rotary letterpress from rubber or later plastic plates, the originating publisher would then lend the plates, usually charging a standard fee of £1.00 per page.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### National Printing Heritage Trust

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