

Printing History News

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

Number 29 † Winter 2010

PHS NEWS

Website

Any members of the PHS who have had occasion to visit the Society's website over the past few months may have noticed some small changes in both presentation and content. The Committee has been aware for some time that the website is not ideally suited to its purpose, which is to provide a source of information for members as well as to promote the Society to non-members. Over the coming months further, and possibly more radical, changes are likely, with the aim of making the website a much more effective means of communication.

One small but significant change in the past few weeks has been to introduce a new membership application form, which is now available both in PDF-format for downloading and as an online form. The appearance of this new form coincides with the introduction of a new way of paying subscriptions to the Society, using PayPal. This should make it much easier for our overseas members in particular to pay their annual subscriptions, and if this proves to be the case, the use of PayPal may also be extended to the purchase of back-copies of the Society's publications.

The Committee is keen to receive ideas and suggestions from members as to how the Society's website could be improved. If you have any suggestions, please send them by e-mail to secretary@printinghistoricalsociety.org.uk. All suggestions will be given careful consideration and greatly appreciated in helping to determine future changes.

New Members

The PHS is very pleased to welcome the following new members: Joan Boudreau, McLean, U.S.A.; Professor Dr Pierre Delsaert, Antwerp, Belgium; Patrick Goossens, Antwerp, Belgium; Hennepin County Library, Minnetonka, U.S.A.; David Leonard, Alton, England; Pia Östlund, London, England; David Rose, New York, U.S.A.; Stephen Sword, Stouffville, Canada.

PHS *Journal*

The reprinted *Journal* 15 will be sent to members shortly, during December 2010 or early January 2011. *Journal* 16 (Winter 2010) will be ready during January.

Grants in Printing History for 2011

A reminder that the closing date for applications for the 2011 Printing Historical Society grants is 1 January 2011 (for further details see the grants and prizes section of the PHS website at printinghistoricalsociety.org.uk, or contact Peggy Smith by e-mail at m.m.smith1@btinternet.com).

ST BRIDE NEWS AND EVENTS

Friends of St Bride Library

An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Friends was held on the 26 October and asked to consider a formal proposal by the committee that all of its current responsibilities be passed on to the St Bride Foundation. The proposal was unanimously accepted by those present, and the committee was dissolved.

The group known as 'Friends of St Bride Library' was formed to represent the interests of the Library, to acknowledge its importance, and to fight for its existence at a time when the future was uncertain. Recent changes in the long-term plans for the Foundation include the preservation and maintenance of the Library, which is now acknowledged as the jewel in the Foundation's crown. Over the years the Friends have worked tirelessly to support the Library and generate much-needed revenue. Whilst the threat to the Library is now minimal the Foundation wishes to work with the Friends, thank them for the huge role they have played in the preservation of the Library and help them to continue to support it. Friends conferences, lectures and events – which have gained

a reputation for excellence and done wonderful work publicizing the Library – will continue to be organized by St Bride, under the guidance of a group of the Friends who will devise, and advise on, an on-going programme. In this way the Friends and the Foundation can work together to support and celebrate the Library. Further information can be found at www.stbride.org.



*Detail of a punch cut
by Nicolaes Briot*

Justin Howes Memorial Lecture

On Tuesday 22 February 2011, John A. Lane will speak on *Printing types in the Dutch golden age: Nicolaes Briot, Christoffel van Dijck and Nicolaus Kis*. Types from sixteenth-century France and the Low Countries and from most of the eighteenth-century British foundries have been well catalogued. But Nicolaes Briot – possibly the most important figure in the Dutch 'golden age' – remains almost unknown, the types of the more famous Christoffel van Dijck are best known from specimens issued by his successors, and those of Nicolaus Kis from recuttings made in the 1920s from a few surviving sets of matrices (issued under the name Janson). Recently discovered specimens issued by contemporary Dutch typefounders help paint a better picture of the seminal work of these and other masters, and research in archives and libraries fills many of the remaining gaps. John Lane will show types by these Dutch masters and suggest that Briot's roman types were the principal models for Van Dijck, Kis and Caslon. The lecture will be held in the Bridewell Hall, and is free and open to all (but please book tickets in advance from St Bride).

Print workshops

St Bride Foundation is bringing letterpress printing back to Fleet Street. The exhibition room, which has long housed presses and artefacts from the craft, is being transformed into a print workshop, where practical teaching and hands-on experience can take place. The opening of the workshop this November was in response to the many requests for demonstrations and classes. As a result, a series of courses and workshops is now on offer. Throughout 2011 the range of classes will be developed to include kindred trades and techniques, in response to the ideas which this new venture will inspire.

Bookings are currently being taken for a 'letterpress short course' (three hours a week for six weeks), two day 'letterpress intensives', one day workshops for linocut and type posters and make-your-own-greeting-card classes. Group bookings are available and these are tailored to meet the needs and interests of each specific group. Open access bookings for use of the space can be made for four-hour and eight-hour sessions, following an induction to ensure best use of the facilities. For further information see the website at printworkshop.stbridefoundation.org or contact the Foundation on 020 7353 3331.

The design of understanding. A one-day conference with this title will be held on Friday 28 January 2011. Tickets cost £75 (£60 for Friends of St Bride), concessions at £30 (£25 for Friends). Curated by Max Gadney, the conference explores design's contribution to understanding. He writes: 'We will not just be looking at the discipline of Information Design, but broader, to subjects such as visual and statistical literacy – as I believe that good conferences have breadth as well as depth.' Speakers will include Michael Agar, Michael Blastland, Scott Byrne-Fraser, Chris Heathcote, David McCandless, Paul Rennie, Simon Rogers, Jack Schulze and Rob Waller. For further details, and booking, please see the website at www.stbride.org.



Collecting printing's past

Patrick Goossens

In my early life I always had a fascination for the past. I grew up in a family that had its roots in Antwerp for three generations (I was the fourth), and in

a house in the centre of the town that dated back to 1504, though the family business had nothing to do with printing. My father allowed me to get a degree in history and, as a bookworm, I began to build a private library. My passion for printing came about one day when on the back cover of an antiquarian book catalogue (this was long before the internet, when one would have to stroll in bookshops and read printed catalogues) an advertisement caught my eye: 'why buy more books when you can print them yourself?' It was for a complete small workshop with an old treadle press. I immediately set out to get it, and hauled it to the third floor with the help of some friends. I had great plans to print ephemera, edit unpublished papers, print crests and heraldic broadsheets... Soon, however, I found that I had too little type, it was of poor quality, and that it took forever to 'diss' after printing. But I had caught the bug, and began to study the history of printing and typesetting and to seek out old equipment. A handpress was found, more type, another press, more type, a linecasting machine, more type, and so on. My personal favourites were nineteenth-century machines, since they are basically very simple but beautifully embellished. Soon I learned that for much of the first 500 years of printing, not all that much had changed, technically.

A stone's-throw away from our house was the Plantin-Moretus Museum where as a child I was fascinated by the print-room with its many wooden handpresses. Maybe it was there that I got the bug. Anyway, I set out to get an overview of the machines that had been made since the invention of printing with movable type. I found beautiful Stanhope presses made in France, Holland and even Belgium, and discovered that in Antwerp a founder named Bouhoulle made copies of Stanhope presses as early as 1820. In the United Kingdom I managed to buy my first Columbian press from the late Justin Howes. Some presses were in terrible condition, used as garden ornaments or scattered all over the place, while others had been used to embellish the foyers of printing and publishing houses and were painted in the most shining black paint one can imagine. Luckily for me, many presses were in inaccessible places, and needed a lot of manual work to get them out. Thus the owners were often happy to see them removed, and did not ask great sums for them. This was not always the case, of course, and some really rare presses

like the 'off-side' Columbian (the original form of the press – later models have the bar fixed to the near-side) took a fair lot of investment.

At present the collection of handpresses gives a good overview of what was made in Europe and includes cylinder presses, treadles, bookbinding machinery, lithographic presses, rolling presses, tools and utensils and, of course, typesetting equipment. Linecasters such as Intertype, Linotype and Typograph are represented. But my major interest is the Monotype composition caster and its big brother the Supercaster. Finding these is a story in itself, and I was lucky to get a complete workshop from a printer in Brussels; I also met the man who operated these machines, who was willing to help me keep them operational. My search for more Monotype equipment brought me back to the UK. Often I found that everybody was convinced that such equipment should be 'saved', but nobody was able to invest in the move, storage, or operation of the equipment, let alone to buy the machinery. Monotype materials were, in the time of hot metal, very expensive, and the myth persists that they have kept their value. However, I was willing to acquire them and to organize the complicated and costly moves. Unfortunately some outfits were 'cherry-picked' by others who took the most desirable items (such as mats, large composition moulds, and the rare wedges). Nevertheless I did save a lot of material, and some collections that were originally split up are now back together under my roof. I also became interested in typefoundry equipment, which is almost impossible to find. Luckily a lot has survived in museums, but if anyone has the odd hand-mould lying around, do give me a call! I am still on the lookout for all kinds of equipment, large and small to complete the collection, which will serve as research material for a thesis on the 'Belgian mechanics and their iron hand-presses'. First steps have also been taken to improve accessibility for the collection, and I was hoping to join the organization of Belgian printing museums, which has only recently started to meet. Unfortunately they had no interest in my collection and so I hope that this article, together with the membership of the Association of European Printing Museums, will help to spread the word about my collection of printing's past.

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PRINT NETWORKS CONFERENCE 2011: RELIGION AND THE BOOK TRADE

Call for papers and Conference Fellowship

The twenty-ninth Print Networks Conference on the history of the British book trade will take place at the National Library of Wales on 19–21 July 2011. En-suite accommodation will be provided on the campus of Aberystwyth University, overlooking Cardigan Bay. In addition to a full programme of papers, there will be a conference dinner and a visit to the Roderic Bowen Library in Lampeter.

2011 marks the quarter-centenary of the Authorised Version of the Bible, and so ‘religion and the book trade’ has been chosen as the theme for the conference. This theme is broadly defined, and any papers relating to the production, distribution and reception of religious texts and images from the middle ages to the modern era will be considered. Papers should be of 30–40

minutes’ duration. An abstract of the offered paper and a brief CV (no more than one side of A4 in total) should be submitted by 31 January 2011 to Timothy Cutts, Head of Rare Books Unit, The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth SY23 3BU. E-mail: tjc@llgc.org.uk.

The Print Networks Conference also offers an annual fellowship to a scholar who wishes to present a paper at the Conference. The fellowship covers the cost of attendance and some assistance towards travel-costs. A summary of the research being undertaken, accompanied by a letter of recommendation from a tutor or supervisor, should be sent to the above address by 31 January 2011.

The papers presented will be considered for publication in the *Print networks* series. It is understood that papers offered to the Conference will be original work and not delivered to any similar body before presentation at this Conference. It is part of the agreement with the publishers that papers will not be published elsewhere.

Don Turner

Readers will be sad to hear the news of the death of Don Turner, probably the last typesetter to work at the University Press, Oxford. He died in October at the age of 78. Like many of those associated with printing at the Press, he was made redundant in the 1980s. Richard Russell recalls that the last job Don undertook was probably the casting of type for J. J. Augustin in Gluckstadt and for a Belgian firm in Leuven, as part of the Press’s obligations to Dr Gardiner’s Trustees relating to his hieroglyphic fount.

Don learned his trade from Len Bullen (as Len had from Stan Squires), and may have been the last indentured typesetter in the United Kingdom. The Science Museum was able to make a video of Don at work before his professional skills became extinct, and more recently Don and Stan Nelson demonstrated typesetting together at a conference held at Saint Catherine’s College, Oxford.

Corrigendum to Hendrik D. L. Vervliet, *French Renaissance printing types* (2010)

The following specimen should be substituted for that printed on page 193 (figure 119c) of *French Renaissance printing types* (copies were sent to Printing Historical Society members in early 2010). The specimen printed on page 193 is actually Granjon’s Great Primer Roman (also shown, correctly, on page 201). The following corrigendum is printed here in such a form (with a blank verso) that it can be excised and tipped or pasted into Dr Vervliet’s book. It is hoped that this traditional (even historical) form of cancel-slip will serve both to correct the *Conspectus* and to remind readers of a printing practice which is now, more or less, defunct.

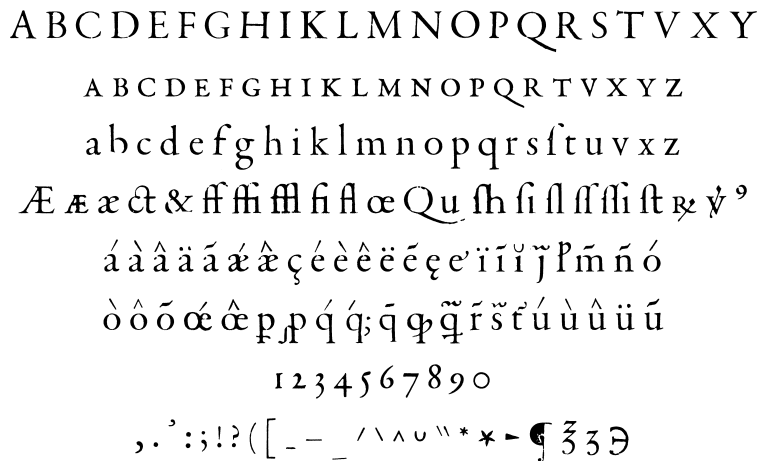


Figure 119c Garamont’s Great Primer Roman^B [R 118] or *Gros-Romain* (1549) as cast from matrices in the Plantin-Moretus Museum (MA 20a). Courtesy Plantin-Moretus Museum, Antwerp.

Printing press wanted for demonstration

In April 2011, Saint Mary's Church Kingsclere, Hampshire, is celebrating the four-hundredth anniversary of the publication of the King James (Authorised) Version of the Bible. As part of a week of events, we are hoping to provide an exhibition on the history of this version of the Bible and the printing process which made it so accessible to the populace. We would like to provide a demonstration of printing, with a working press in the church for the week, to enable people to see how the pages were created. If anyone could help with making this part of our week a reality, please contact Debra Power by phone on 01635 291247 or by e-mail at debra.power@scottwilson.com.

SMALL ADS

Free to a museum, the following items: a Gestetner hand-operated duplicator, ca. 1950, in working order with stencils and ink; a Varityper, as used in the Newspaper Strike, in full working order and complete with a range of type segments; an Apricot FT computer, bought in 1985 (for well over £1,000) with 'Star' dot-matrix printer and all

manuals, disks, etc.; an unusual double-depth type case of the kind used to hold heavy fonts of large metal types for use on auction/election posters. The items are located in Chester, and are free to any museum which can arrange collection. If interested, please contact Derek Nuttall on 01244 660501.

Wanted for St Bride printing classes.

The St Bride Library's printing classes and workshops (see page 2) are still in need of some equipment, especially randoms and tallboys to contain, and make accessible, some of the many hundreds of cases of type the Foundation owns, and a cylinder proof press (Vandercook or similar). If you can help, please contact Richard Lawrence by telephone on 01865 424594 or by e-mail on ZRLawrence@aol.com.

Private press books 2004-2007 is now available. It consists of 221 pages describing more than 500 books and 180 secondary sources, with a full index and 37 reproductions of images or pages from the books described. Copies are available from the editor, Paul W. Nash, 19 Fosseyway Drive, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire GL5 0DU, at £20 each (£10 for members of the Private Libraries Association and contributing printers).

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www.npht.org.uk

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Please pass spare copies of Printing History News on to an interested friend