

Printing History News

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

Number 36 ★ Autumn 2012

ST BRIDE NEWS AND EVENTS

The St Bride Library is pleased to announce that it will re-open to the public on Wednesday 26 September 2012. To begin with, the reading room will only be open on Wednesdays, between 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., but it is hoped to extend opening hours soon. Access to the Library at other times is possible by prior appointment (to book please e-mail library@sbf.org.uk). The on-line catalogue of the library is accessible at prism.talis.com/cityoflondon/ and it is wise to request items in advance of a Wednesday visit to avoid waiting for delivery when you arrive. Further details can be found at www.stbride.org.

Beatrice Warde memorial lecture

The 2012 Beatrice Warde memorial lecture will be given by Paul Barnes, who will speak at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday 18 October on 'You can't repeat the past'. Barnes is a graphic designer and typographer who also makes typefaces and, with Christian Schwartz, runs a typefoundry, Commercial Type. In the Beatrice Warde lecture he will talk about how important the past has been in his work, how it has influenced many of his designs and what we can learn from it in making contemporary typefaces.

He will be showing his latest design 'Marian' and signing copies of *Marian: une collection de revivals* (a bilingual edition, published by Ypsilon Éditeur) afterwards. The lecture will be held in the Bridewell Hall at St Bride and tickets (available in advance from St Bride) cost £5.00 each.

Illustration: making pictures. A one-day conference curated by Becky Chilcott. Friday 19 October 2012 in the Bridewell Hall, St Bride Foundation. Price £85.00 (£70.00 for Friends, £60 for full-time students). Illustration plays an integral part in many design processes – from interpreting the ideas of designers, to bringing to life an

author's words. One normally sees only the highly-polished end-result in the pages of a magazine, on a billboard or jam-jar label, but for illustrators the journey starts with ideas, with scribbles and sketches, mistakes and musings.

Speakers will include Ben Eine, Linzie Hunter, Kai and Sunny, John Lawrence, Colin McHenry, Martin O'Neill, Nic Rawling, Peter Schrank and Helen Stephens. Demonstrations will be given by Paul Antonio, Helen Ingham, Richard Lawrence and Peter Smith. A full conference programme is available at www.stbride.org/events/illustration/schedule.html.

Ravilious and friends in the age of lithography. An evening of lectures with festive refreshments. Wednesday 5 December 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in the Bridewell Hall, Saint Bride Foundation. Price: £20.00 (Friends and concessions £15.00). Programme: 7:00 Alan Powers 'The new stone age: lithography between the wars'; 7:25 Joe Pearson 'Nothing need be ugly: Noel Carrington and lithographed children's books of the 1930s and 40s'; 7:50 break; 8:20 James Russell 'Eric Ravilious: submarine'. There will also be an opportunity to buy books and prints from fine press publishers and dealers.

Letterpress: something to say. A one-day conference. Friday 9 November 2012, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Saint Bride. The conference will explore letterpress as a means for delivering real content, to tell stories, transmit political or personal statements and information, to be more than fine printing or hand-printing alone. Speakers will include Anthony Burrill, Catherine Dixon, Ian Gabb (RCA), Thomas Gravenmaker, Dylan Kendle (Tomato), Barcelona collective L'automatica, Peter Nencini and Francois Rappo, with further contributions anticipated from Prensa Libertad in Buenos Aires and the Vista Sans Wood Type Project. There will be opportunities for participants to voice their ideas and opinions, as part of a dialogue about purposes and processes

of letterpress. Further details can be found at www.stbride.org.

Call for posters. We are keen to see your interpretation of the conference theme and are inviting you to submit posters that broadly respond to this. Posters will be exhibited during the conference and sold for a small fee, anonymously, at the end of the day, with all proceeds going to St Bride Library. Please submit A3 format posters no later than Friday 19 October to Rose Gridneff, BA (Hons) Graphic Design, University of Brighton, 58-67 Grand Parade, Brighton BN2 0JY (e-mail r.gridneff@brighton.ac.uk)

Printing workshops

Open evenings. Come and look round the workshop, see the presses and equipment, meet the tutors and find out more about the courses on offer. Tuesday 30 October 2012, 6:00-9:00 p.m. Entry £5.00.

Getting started with the Adana. This one-day course is for new or aspiring letterpress printers who hope to set up a simple home studio using the Adana platen press. You will receive instruction in hand-composition of type and printing on an Adana, as well as maintenance of the press, workshop management and what to look out for when purchasing equipment. *Facilitator:* Helen Ingham. Saturday 22 September and Saturday 20 October, 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. *Maximum class size:* six. *Fee:* £90.00.

Letterpress short course. Designed for beginners or those with some knowledge of typography, graphic design or relief printing. There will be six sessions running from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. every Monday from 1 October to 5 November 2012. *Maximum class size:* six. *Fee:* £355.00 (£305.00 for those over sixty and full-time students).

During this course students will examine the processes and materials needed to create their own letterpress work using Albion, Columbian, Stanhope and Adana presses. Each week

will focus on a particular area of letterpress. The course will begin with an induction to the workshop, health and safety, an overview of letterpress printing with examples of practitioners' work, an explanation of hand-composition and an introduction to the presses.

Subsequent weeks will cover wood-letter printing, table-top platen presses, two-colour printing and the use of metal type and polymer blocks. The final sessions will be dedicated to more experimental processes such as mono-printing and overprinting whereby participants will create their own pieces under supervision. The course will provide an excellent overview of the letterpress process, materials and workshop management. *Facilitator:* Helen Ingham.

Two-day letterpress intensive. Designed for beginners, those with some limited experience and those wanting to extend their printing experience to a new process. Sessions run 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday 27 October and Saturday 3 November 2012. *Maximum class size:* six. *Fee:* £245.00 (£195.00 concessions). This two day class will explore the basics of hand composition using metal type, and progress to more advanced techniques. The working of a number of different letterpress printing machines will be studied and their suitability for different kinds of work drawn out. The importance of ink and paper will also be explored. Beyond these basics, the direction of the course will be dictated by the interests of participants. A collaborative poster will be created and individuals will also be able to print business cards, letterheads or similar projects. *Facilitator:* Richard Lawrence.

Booking and further details. To book, and for further details (including other classes, courses and workshops) please see www.printworkshop.stbride.org. Alternatively you can book by credit card, by telephone on 0207 353 4660. Concessions are available for members of the Friends of St Bride.

OTHER EVENTS

Book History Research Network

The Book History Research Network holds a series of twice yearly events. Information about these and a register

of interests can be found on their website at www.bookhistory.org.uk. The next event is:

Politics and the power of print. A study day. Friday 30 November 2012 at Chetham's Library, Manchester. From the pamphleteers of the English Civil War to the library of 'Occupy Wall Street', the image of the book has often been a central element in political propaganda. But in what ways have cultures of books and reading impacted upon and shaped political action and ideologies? Or, conversely, how has politics shaped the form and understanding of texts?

Call for papers. Proposals are invited for papers relating to the theme of 'Politics and the power of print', from any historical period or geographical location, relating to movements across the ideological spectrum. Possible topics include, but are not limited to: political publishing, distribution and retailing networks; the translation and editing of political texts; political libraries and reading groups, both physical and digital; reading and local politics; censorship and the freedom of the press; political journals and newspapers, pamphlets, leaflets and political ephemera; the occupational and industrial politics of printing/publishing; politics and the novel; the iconography of the book or printing press in political communication. Please send proposals of no more than 300 words to Catherine Feely at cathfeely@gmail.com by Friday 2 October 2012.

Letterpress courses at Frogmore Mill

The Paper Trail offers regular, roughly monthly letterpress courses at its Frogmore Paper Mill in Apsley, near Hemel Hempstead. The sessions are led by ex-industry and education printing professionals and are open to complete beginners, offering an introductory insight to letterpress printing and also the chance for those with art or design expertise to 'have-a-go'. Each participant sets a specimen text in metal type, which they then print using one of the Adana presses from the collection. Historical and contextual knowledge is also delivered. On completion of the course participants may access the equipment in order to work on projects of their own creation. A small charge is made for this and access is by prior arrangement. Courses run on Sundays from

11:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m. and cost £45.00. For details and course dates, or to book a place call 01442 234600 or e-mail education@thepapertrail.org.uk.

Oxford Guild of Printers' Wayzgoose

The Oxford Guild of Printers will hold its biennial 'Wayzgoose' (a fair for printers and collectors of fine printing) at Oxford Brookes University, Gipsy Lane, Headington, Oxford OX3 0BP, on Saturday 13 October 2012, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission is free. Stalls will be held by fine and private press printers, specialist booksellers, societies and suppliers, and printers will also be selling second-hand type and printing equipment.

The venue is that used for the regular Oxford Fine Press Book Fairs, and is easily accessible by bus or train (the railway station a short bus journey from the campus), or by car (there is some parking at the Gipsy Lane site and more at the nearby Headington Hill campus of the University). For further details see the Guild's website at www.oxfordguildofprinters.com.

'Image and word' exhibition

Image and word: the Julian Francis collection of prints and illustrated books. Exhibition at Monnow Valley Arts Centre, Walterstone, Hereford HR2 0DY. Open until 28 October, Thursdays and Fridays 11:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 2:00–5:00 p.m. (other days by appointment). The exhibition has been selected from Julian Francis's collection of (mostly twentieth-century) prints and illustrated books. Some drawings and prints will be for sale (including work by Ardizzone, Buckland Wright, Gordon Craig, Eric Gill, S. W. Hayter, David Jones and Sir Kyffin Williams). An illustrated catalogue of the exhibition, with an essay by Simon Brett and a foreword by Ian Rogerson is available at £10.00 (post free in the UK). In conjunction with with exhibition, Nicolas and Frances McDowall of the Old Stile Press will talk at the Arts Centre on their work with artists on Friday 12 October, 6:30 for 7:00 p.m. Tickets cost £6.00 each. Please book in advance (further details on the website at www.monnowvalleyarts.org).



Mike Haigh with the Columbian press at Beck Isle Museum



The composing room at Beck Isle Museum

The Beck Isle Museum

Mike Haigh

Our small local museum is a charitable trust and was opened in 1967. It currently has twenty-seven rooms of local history exhibits with a strong Victorian theme, operated totally by volunteers. We have quite a few working rooms within the museum, and demonstrate on special 'living history days' throughout the year many crafts, including printing, blacksmithing, lacemaking, quilling, quilting, rag rug-making and spinning. We have a new website which has just come on-line in August, with much more information for those interested, at www.beckislemuseum.org.uk.

The print room is one of the most active. It is operated two or three times a week by a retired compositor (myself) and a letterpress machine minder (Derek Haswell); we give live working demonstrations and talks covering commercial and newspaper letterpress printing to members of the public, school parties and many organised visitor groups (last year the museum had over 11,500 visitors). We utilise our magnificent Columbian press (no. 1604 made by William Carpenter in 1854) and a small treadle Peerless Platen, to print mainly posters, business cards, paper bags and other small print jobs for the Museum as required. We have a mixed bag of type, both wood and metal. We have various small displays of other related letterpress equipment, a working Adana, a gold foil machine, a lead cutter, a mitreing machine and many other tools and equipment used in the black arts of letterpress. One of the main functions that seems to be most appreciated by the public is that we do not just demonstrate the equipment, but make time to talk about how life was back in the good old letterpress days of oil based inks, cleaning down stones with petrol

and benzine etc. before oiling them, the life of a printer's devil, casting ingots for the Linotype machines, fetching snuff, dripping sandwiches for the men, printer's pie, union demarcation lines and the many pleasures of the 1960s and 1970s.

My own compositor apprenticeship commenced in 1960 at the age of fifteen and a couple of months, in a local print shop in Doncaster where we produced a wide range of general commercial printing work; we also had the local evening paper (the *Yorkshire Evening News*) and a couple of weekly papers as part of this operation and so the apprentices (six of us usually) had the opportunity to get hands-on in both disciplines. The apprenticeship ended after six years when journeyman status was attained. I was sent for day release at Sheffield College of Printing (under the guidance of Principal Roy Millington – a great instructor and motivator – see his history of Stephenson Blake) where I managed a couple of City and Guilds qualifications, my practicals always much better than theory, though I really enjoyed the imposition lessons.

Back in Doncaster I progressed to working mornings on the commercial side and afternoons on the newspaper, I moved from newspaper page make-up to Linotypes, Ludlows etc. using hot metal, to the punched paper-tape Fairchild keyboards that drove the Monarch casters, and then to a networked Has-tech computerised system which was eventually upgraded to allow importation of graphics to give complete page make-up. From there we moved to a series of differing 'front end' systems which were all the rage in the 1980s and 1990s. During this period I moved into management along with moves to other companies. I retired from one of Johnston's operations in 2004 as a production director.

I find the move back to letterpress in the Museum and the chance to get my hands dirty, along with meeting the public, very satisfying and fulfilling. Looking back over the last forty odd years and the four or so industrial revolutions I survived in the printing trade I feel really lucky!

PRINTING HISTORICAL SOCIETY SMALL RESEARCH GRANTS FOR 2013

The Printing Historical Society is pleased to continue its limited number of small grants in 2013, including:

- Research on topics relating to the history of printing
- Publishable reports on archives relating to the history of printing

Grants are limited to historical research in: 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 for 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 the funds envisaged; costs incurred before application are unlikely to be successful, as are projects that are primarily bibliographical. Students, academics and independent researchers may apply. Some preference will be given to independent researchers.

The application should consist of: 1) a covering letter of up to 500 words, containing a brief *curriculum vitae*, and the name, address and e-mail address of one referee (who has agreed to serve as your referee); and 2) a description of

the project and budget, of up to 1,000 words. The project description should state its purpose clearly and succinctly. Please also state whether your project is part of a larger one, and whether you are applying elsewhere for funding. You will be expected to submit a written report one year after the award of your grant. Submit your application to the Chairman of the PHS Grants and Prizes Sub-Committee, Dr Peggy Smith, at m.m.smith1@btinternet.com. Hard copy submissions are no longer encouraged, but consult Dr Smith if this is necessary. **Application deadline:** 1 January 2013. Awards will be announced at the PHS AGM in Spring 2013, for disbursement the following month.

PHS Journal

Sandro Jung

Number 18 of the *Journal of the Printing Historical Society* will be published in October. In addition to a number of book reviews, it will feature three articles on the history of printing, print culture and publishing. The issue is especially richly illustrated. Please send any call for papers/contributions, notes and article submissions to the Editor at Sandro.Jung@UGent.be.

Bartoline's 'Clean spirit' for printing inks

I have received a note from Bernard Seward recording his experience that a new solvent, called 'Clean spirit', is not suitable for use with oil-based printing inks. The solvent is advertised as an environmentally-friendly alternative to white spirit and turpentine. It is largely odourless, non-toxic, non-flammable and biodegradable, and is offered by the manufacturer, Bartoline, as effective 'to clean both oil and water based paints from brushes, rollers and paint pads'. One must applaud Bartoline for attempting to produce a solvent of this sort. However, it is evidently intended to be used with paints, and may not be suitable for other pigments, such as printers' inks. The Editor would be glad to hear the experiences of other printers who have tried 'Clean spirit'.

SMALL ADS

Ashlock Press (depicted below) and associated items for sale. Dating from the 1920s, in good condition, with cover, but in need of one new roller.

In addition to the press there is: a 'type setting appliance' (also depicted), with cover; a scrapbook of printed ephemera made by Roland Gray for events around Walton, Aylesbury, between around 1927 and 1930; business card for 'Roland Gray, Printer'; recent copies of the patent specifications nos. 173,041 and 179,591 (for the press and type setting appliance); copies of *Small printer* for 7 July 1986 and September 1986 containing articles about the Ashlock Press. The collection would be ideal for a museum, university printing or design department or a dedicated printing historian. Offers in the region of £250, please, for the whole collection, to Stuart McMinn, 213 Marine Drive, Saltdean, East Sussex BN2 8DA. Telephone 01273 308857. E-mail: skmcminn@hotmail.com. Buyer to collect (but Mr McMinn can help with delivery in the Saltdean/Brighton area).



Treadle press wanted by Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust (printing area around 9 x 14 inches, with rollers, bearers and chases). Would consider Cropper, Jarrold, Arab, Minerva, Heidelberg etc. Contact Gillian Crumpton (gillian.crumpton@ironbridge.org.uk telephone 01952 435900).



Albion for sale. Albion printing press by J. M. Powell (no. 4439, dated 1890) for sale, complete with tympan and frisket and in complete working order

(depicted above). The bed size is 21 x 15 inches (53 x 38 cm). Originally owned by what became the Vickers shipyard in Barrow it has had only three owners in 120 years. Full details, including complete provenance, available. Located in Bolton, Lancashire (the purchaser will need to arrange collection). Offers around £2,500. For further details please contact noelene@originsart.com.

NEW BOOK FROM OXFORD GUILD OF PRINTERS

The Oxford Guild of Printers has just published the winner of its 2012 short story competition, Louise Ihringer's *It is unfortunate for the ants*. 20 pages, royal octavo. Finely printed by the Evergreen Press, bound by the Fine Book Bindery in full cloth with a cover-label. Price £30.00 (£22.00 to Guild members). Available from the President, Miles Wigfield, Coneygar Lodge, Quenington, Gloucestershire GL7 5BZ. E-mail miles.wigfield@bopenworld.com.

USEFUL CONTACTS

National Printing Heritage Trust
www.npht.org.uk

Hon. Correspondent: Jeremy Winkworth
jezmactastic@hotmail.com

Treasurer: E. C. James, The Pinfold, Church Road, Dodleston, Chester, Cheshire CH4 9NG
gbf70@dial.pipex.com

Printing Historical Society
c/o St Bride Library, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London EC4Y 8EE
www.printinghistoricalsociety.org.uk
secretary@printinghistoricalsociety.org.uk

Chair: John Hinks, jh241@le.ac.uk

Treasurer: Andrew Dolinski, 34 Martineau Lane, Hurst, Berkshire RG10 0SF
treasurer@printinghistoricalsociety.org.uk

Journal Editor: Sandro Jung, Department of Literary Studies (English Studies), Ghent University, Blandijnberg 2B-9000, Ghent
Sandro.Jung@UGent.be

St Bride Library, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London EC4Y 8EE. www.stbride.org
Librarian: *post vacant*
glyn@sbf.org.uk

Friends of St Bride Library
friends@stbride.org

Printing History News
Editor: Paul W. Nash, 19 Fosseyway Drive, Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos. GL56 0DU
paul@strawberrypress.co.uk

Published by the NPHT, PHS and the Friends of St Bride Library, September 2012. Printed by Synergie, Birmingham.