

Printing History News

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

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The National Printing Heritage Trust: twenty-five years old

Derek Nuttall

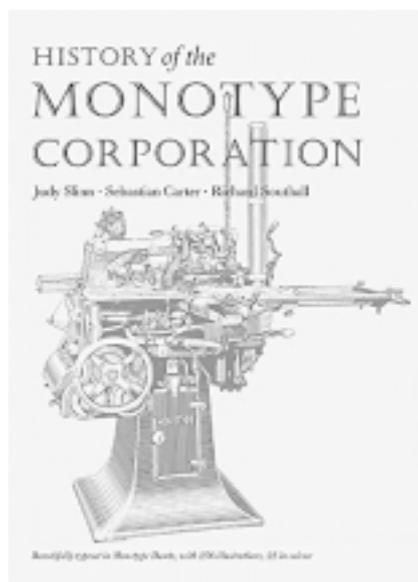
The afternoon of Wednesday 24 January 1990, saw the formation of the NPHT at a meeting held in the Northgate Arena, Chester. Its four aims were:

- 1 To make grants to museums to enable the purchase or restoration of artefacts pertaining to printing and its related trades.
- 2 To purchase or rent accommodation for the storage of important items that could not be housed in existing museums and were in danger of being scrapped.
- 3 To finance, wholly or in part, the establishment of a National Printing Museum.
- 4 To give financial help to projects that aimed to preserve printing artefacts and archives.

The meeting was set up by Stuart Nicholls of the Grosvenor Museum, Chester. Those attending were Gwyn Evans, E. Clifford James, E. A. Kirkpatrick (SOGAT), James Mosley (St Bride Library), Tony Nightingale (BPIF), Derek Nuttall, and G. Tomlinson (Pudsey Printing Museum). A working committee was appointed to formulate the Trust's aims and to draft the Trust Deed. This met in the boardroom of W. H. Evans and Sons Ltd on 28 February and was chaired by Dr Nuttall. A Steering Committee was appointed, consisting of Richard Hills (Director, Manchester Museum of Science), Michael Passmore (Passmore International), H. S. C. Hall (Whittaker Compugraphics), Gwyn Evans, Stuart Nicholls and representatives of the BPIF and SOGAT.

Two years later, the official launch took place on the evening of 13 April 1992 at the BPIF headquarters at 11 Bedford Row. Some fifty people attended and short talks were given by Lawrence Wallis, Michael Twyman and James Mosley.

In its twenty-fifth year the Trust has made a grant to the Juniper Press (see *PHN* 43, page 4) and held discussions about the nature and details of an ideal National Printing Museum. The Trust is always glad of new friends, committee members and Trustees, and is currently seeking to appoint a new Treasurer (see page 4).



History of the Monotype Corporation

The *History of the Monotype Corporation* was published in November, jointly by the PHS and Vanbrugh Press. Written by Judy Slinn (business history), Sebastian Carter (typographical history) and Richard Southall (technical history), and edited by Andrew Boag and Christopher Burke, the book runs to 432 pages with numerous illustrations, some in colour. It has been designed by Burke, using Monotype faces, and is bound in cloth with a dust-jacket printed letterpress by Hand and Eye Letterpress.

PHS members (at the time of publication) will have received copies in lieu of two numbers of the Society's *Journal* (see page 4). Non-members can acquire copies from Vanbrugh Press,

and there will be an event at the Type Archive on 19 January 2015 to mark the publication. Further details of the book and Type Archive event may be found on the Vanbrugh Press website at www.vanbrughpress.com.

ST BRIDE NEWS AND EVENTS

The St Bride Library remains open to the public on Wednesdays between 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Access is possible at other times by prior appointment (please e-mail library@sbf.org.uk). Access is open to all, on acquisition of a Reader Card (costing £5.00 for one year, but free to Friends of St Bride). The on-line catalogue of the Library can be seen at prism.talis.com/cityoflondon/. Further details are at www.sbf.org.uk/library.

Justin Howes Memorial Lecture

Stan Nelson will give the 2015 Justin Howes Memorial Lecture in the Bridewell Hall at St Bride, at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday 28 April 2015. His lecture is entitled *A surprising diversity: the typefounder's hand-mould through 400 years*. The hand-mould is arguably the single most important invention in the history of western printing and, once its principles had been established in the fifteenth century they changed little. But the details of the mould, and the manner in which it was used, evolved over the centuries, until by the mid-nineteenth century it allowed for as many as six hundred sorts to be cast per hour. It was only at this point that the hand-mould was superseded by other technologies, which automated the process of type-casting.

Stan Nelson is a printing historian and practical typefounder, who has made his own punches, matrices and moulds as part of the process of understanding this vital technology. He retired from the Smithsonian Institution in 2003 and has written and lectured

extensively on the history and practice of typefounding. Tickets are available in advance from St Bride at £5.00.

Printing and book workshops

Three-week hand-composition and letterpress course. During this course students will examine the processes and skills needed to create their own work using letterpress. This includes hand-composition of metal type and the use of Albion, Columbian, Stanhope and Vandercook hand-presses. Subsequent courses will look at wood-letter printing, two-colour printing and the use of illustration blocks with type. *Facilitator:* Mick Clayton. *Running:* 6:00–9:00 p.m. on Mondays 19 January–2 February 2015. *Fee:* £195.00.

Six-week pop-up books course. Students on this course will make their own moveable book using a variety of different pop-up structures and pull-tab mechanisms, using coloured papers, collage and their own illustrations. They will learn about the best types of paper, tools and materials, and the techniques of folding, cutting and glueing paper and card, as well as the bookbinding skills needed to assemble pages into a pop-up book. *Tutor:* Alex Czinczel. *Running:* 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. on Fridays, 16 January–20 February 2015. *Fee:* £288.00

Creating an artist's book: ten-week course. This course will introduce and develop skills in letterpress and bookbinding through a series of workshops. Students will be introduced to sewing-free book-structures, single-section and multi-section sewn books and other formats that lend themselves to small editions. In addition to letterpress, rubber stamping and monoprint the use of digital imagery will be explored. At the end of the course, students should be able to select and use appropriate materials, develop content using a variety of printing techniques, identify and make a range of book-structures, and combine content and structure to create a small edition. Ideal for the printmaker with little experience of bookbinding, the bookbinder who would like to make the content of their work through print, or a beginner with no experience. *Running:* 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. on Thursdays 15 January–26 March 2015 (excluding 19 February). *Fee:* £480.00.

Booking and further details. To book, and for further details (including other

classes, courses and workshops) please see www.sbf.org.uk and click on the 'Workshops' tab. Alternatively you can book by credit card, by telephone on 0207 353 4660. Concessions are available for Friends of St Bride, over-sixties and full-time students.



LANDMARKS IN PRINTING: FROM ORIGINS TO THE DIGITAL AGE

Conference report by Caroline Archer

It will not have escaped your attention that this year the Printing Historical Society commemorates its fiftieth anniversary and its role in the encouragement of printing history. To celebrate this milestone, the Society hosted a two-day conference, *Landmarks in printing: from origins to the digital age*, which was held on 13–14 November at the St Bride Institute, London.

Around eighty delegates from home and abroad, including academics, students and practitioners, gathered to hear an international line-up of speakers present on various aspects of printing history. The conference opened with guest-speaker Christoph Reske addressing the question of whether or not Johannes Gutenberg invented the hand type-mould; Lotte Hellinga began the second day with an examination of how William Caxton designed his books; and at a special evening event, Michael Twyman provided a masterly review of the history of chromolithography. A further sixteen speakers covered many other aspects of the art and craft of printing, including its aesthetic, cultural, practical and technical achievements across the centuries – albeit the twentieth century was under-represented. However, the general scope and quality of the conference talks was impressive and stimulated much discussion among

the delegates during the all-important refreshment breaks.

But the conference was more than just a series of lectures; there was also plenty of 'doing'. Designer/printmaker Pia Östlund gave a demonstration of the beautiful but lost art of nature printing; and letterpress printer Richard Lawrence delighted delegates with demonstrations of Alan May's new wooden press (depicted left), based on Dürer's drawing of 1511. In addition, there was a display of the Society's publications; a series of short, print-related films; and a reading by Alix Christie from her debut novel *Gutenberg's apprentice*. An evening reception, hosted by PHS and Vanbrugh Press, sparkled as glasses of Prosecco were raised to celebrate the launch of the *History of the Monotype Corporation*.

However, the most important aspect of the anniversary conference was the renewal of old acquaintances and the forging of new friendships through a common interest in the history of printing. This was a truly international, inter-generational event: a barometer that indicates printing history is in good health.



Michael Twyman, Lotte Hellinga and Roy Millington (members of the PHS since its foundation) at the conference

Printing collections of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales Robert Protheroe Jones

Amgueddfa Cymru was the first national institution in the United Kingdom to collect folk culture, commencing in the 1920s, with a dedicated department established in 1932. From an early date printing artefacts were collected, though a cut-off date of around 1880 was initially applied. The printing collection grew slowly until the 1970s when obsolete letterpress equipment was increasingly offered to museums; this resulted in hand and treadle presses (of moderate size and readily moveable

without dismantling) and woodletter (lacking the scrap value of metal type) especially entering the Welsh Folk Museum's collection. 'Folk Life' had moved to a separate site at St Fagans on the western outskirts of Cardiff in 1948. Printing acquisitions tailed off after the 1980s but, coincidentally, the Department of Industry, which had been established in 1959, began to collect printing in the 1990s and shortly thereafter the 'Folk Life' printing collection was consolidated into the 'Industry' collection.

Upon amalgamation, the content and display potential of the collection was reviewed. St Fagans, an 'open air museum' with three dozen re-erected buildings from all parts of Wales, had long-held aspirations to reconstruct a printing-office, should an appropriate building become available; the Department of Industry envisaged primarily displaying printing as a means of communication. Both institutions sought to recognise the importance of printing to Welsh culture, and to the maintenance of the Welsh language from the mid-nineteenth century. The Museum did not seek to be a 'mini Science Museum', which would have required attempting to collect comprehensively across all periods and technologies, but had collected what was available, resulting in good holdings of nineteenth-century machinery, but patchy collections of twentieth-century equipment and type (save for wood letter).

It was concluded that prompt and focused collecting could redress the shortage of type and ancillary equipment but that it was neither feasible nor desirable to attempt large-scale collecting of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century machines, due to collecting costs, limited storage capacity, non-availability of many machines and the unlikelihood of display or use. In the years each side of 2000 the Museum acquired around 250 cases of type with frames, and a wide range of related equipment. This was probably the last opportunity to collect letterpress material on this scale, for offers of sale or donation of such equipment by Welsh printing companies ceased around this time; subsequent offers have been limited to small scale and amateur printers. Although almost entirely of twentieth-century rather than nineteenth-century date, these acquisitions at last brought balance to the printing collection.

Discussions with colleagues at St Fagans concluded that a reconstructed printing office would best be set in the

1870s or 1880s, a period of Welsh literary renaissance with a flood of popular publications and local newspapers, and wide literacy, when print made a specially broad and important contribution to Welsh culture and began to permeate many aspects of everyday life. The printing collections were ideally stocked to support this period, with a Wharfedale, treadle and motorised platens, and iron hand presses suitable to represent a Welsh provincial printing-office publishing a weekly newspaper and a denominational monthly magazine, and undertaking a wide range of jobbing work, including pamphlets and booklets. Some 350 cases of type, wood letter and rule, wooden frames, stones, a guillotine, staplers and suitable ancillary equipment (such as brass and wood galleys rather than steel) are held, enabling a convincing representation of a Welsh provincial printing office of the period. All that is required is for an appropriate building to be offered to St Fagans ...

The Museum's printing collections are entirely of Welsh provenance and comprise in summary: a wooden common press of *circa* 1800; five iron hand presses (Stanhope *circa* 1830, Columbian 1828, Albions 1828 and 1869, unidentified 1830s?); four treadle or motorised jobbing platen presses (Arab, Brehmer, Furnival, Prouty); Wharfedale stop cylinder press; pen ruling machine; Adana eight-five; three rolling-presses; bookbinding roller-press; two wooden standing presses; four casters (unidentified pivotal late-nineteenth century, two Monotypes with keyboards 1930s? and *circa* 1947, Linotype 1958); Quadri-tek phototypesetter; two Brehmer staplers; guillotine; 350 cases of type, wood letter and rule; five stones; related equipment (galleys and galley racks, chases and crosses with side and foot sticks, leading, reglet and furniture, woodcuts, etc.). Additionally, St Fagans holds the contents of a craft book-binder's workshop.

A large and diverse collection of material printed in Wales is held in the Departments of Industry and of Social and Cultural History, and in the Library. This includes Welsh- and English-language ephemera of all descriptions, allowing the interpretation of printing in Wales as an important 'glue' that held communities together. Printing in Wales was long dominated by three great houses: Gee in Denbigh, Hughes in Wrexham and Spurrell in Carmarthen; the first and last of these are represented by machinery. A number of notable second-tier printers are also



The Amgueddfa Cymru common press (in a photograph taken around 1953)

well represented: William Bird, an early Cardiff printer; the Cymric Federation Press owned by the South Wales Miners' Federation; Edward Williams ('Llew Meirion'), Victoria Printing Office, Dolgellau; the Tonn Press, Llandovery; and the Western Mail, quasi-national newspaper and general printers.

Of special importance are the common press depicted above (from south-east Breconshire, which will be included in Alan May's new census, having been omitted from Gaskell's of 1970), the Stanhope (number 421 by Walker, from Pontypool), the woodcuts used to illustrate *Caban f'ewyrth Twm* (the 1853 Welsh translation of *Uncle Tom's cabin*), and a selection of type and specimen books from Yendall and Company, whose Riscatype foundry to have existed in Wales (held as part of the modern industry collection).

Amgueddfa Cymru is always keen to facilitate loans to local museums across Wales and until recently four presses and much equipment was loaned for display at Aberdare, Brecon and Llandovery. However, redevelopments and closures of local museums have resulted in these items being returned to Amgueddfa Cymru with the result that virtually the entire printing collection is now housed in the Museum's Collections Centre at Nantgarw, near Cardiff, to which visits may be made by prior appointment. The Stanhope press and a small selection of type, blocks and plates are displayed – and the press occasionally demonstrated – at the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea, the industrial and transport

museum of Amgueddfa Cymru, as part of the display on communication networks.

The Museum welcomes enquiries concerning its collections. Please contact Robert Protheroe Jones, Principal Curator of Industry, National Waterfront Museum, Oystermouth Road, Swansea, SA1 3RD; 029 20 573630; robert.protheroejones@museumwales.ac.uk

GRANTS IN PRINTING HISTORY FOR 2015 AND BEYOND

The Printing Historical Society is pleased to resume its programme of annual grants, for three years beginning in 2015. The grants – a limited number worth up to £1,000 each – should support research into the history of: printing technology, the printing and related industries, printed materials and artefacts, type and type-founding, print culture, and printing processes and design. On the whole the Society tries not to overlap with the grants offered by bibliographical societies.

The deadline for applications is 1 April 2015. For detailed instructions on how to apply, please see the 'Grants Programme' section of the PHS website at printinghistoricalsociety.org.uk, or contact Giles Mandelbrote by e-mail at giles.mandelbrote@churchofengland.org.

Where is printing being taught?

This question was asked at a recent meeting of the National Printing Heritage Trust. A further question might be 'In what manner is printing being taught (as a hobby, a profession, an historical practice, an art or a craft?)'. The editors will collate any answers received.

PHS Journal

Number 21 of the *Journal of the Printing Historical Society* will now be in members' hands (as will the new *History of the Monotype Corporation*, issued in lieu of two back-numbers of the *Journal*). Thus, at the end of 2014 members will find themselves only two numbers behind-hand, and it is hoped to issue further monographs to make up the remaining ground in the near future. Number 22 will be guest-edited by John Feather on the theme of

the relationships between printers and publishers, and number 23 will be another general issue containing, it is hoped, several papers based on lectures given at this year's PHS conference, as well as Alan May on his reconstructions of Moxon's hand-mould and Dürer's adapted one-pull press and Hendrik Vervliet on Granjon's combinable ornaments, as well as book reviews.

ANNIVERSARY KEEPSAKE

The keepsake which is being issued to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the PHS is almost ready. Two leaves remain to complete – those representing stone lithography and stereotyping – and it is hoped to have the whole ready before the end of 2014. However, the production of these two leaves is proving complex, and copies may not be ready until the new year. Rest assured that all individual members (at the time of the conference) will receive a copy.

Treasurer of the Printing Historical Society and National Printing Heritage Trust

Following the retirement of Andrew Dolinski, the PHS is seeking a new Treasurer. In recent years, the job has been combined with the Treasurership of the NPHT, and it would make sense to continue to connect the roles. The ideal candidate would be someone with an interest in printing and its history, and a knowledge (not necessarily professional) of book-keeping. If you can help, please contact the Secretary of the PHS (details below).

New editor for PHN

Paul W. Nash

Having edited *Printing History News* since 2005 (number 5) and typeset it since 2003 (number 1), I am delighted to announce that I have a successor. Ken Burnley will be taking over as editor and typesetter in 2015. We will prepare the next couple of numbers together, and Ken will take over fully from number 47 or 48. Ken will be known to many readers of *PHN* already. He is a printer, designer and publisher, and taught composition and graphic design at Liverpool College of

Printing for many years. He now runs his own letterpress studio, the Silver Birch Press, as well as helping at the Juniper Press workshop at the Bluecoat in Liverpool. I am sure readers will join me in welcoming Ken as editor.

SMALL AD

Victorian 'mangle' guillotine for sale. Complete, in working order and capable of trimming a ream 24 inches wide. No maker's name, but set in a very solid (and heavy) cast iron framework. A lovely old piece. Until recently, lightly used for environmental charities work. May be inspected any time at 14 Beckford Close, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 9LW. Price £150, loaded on lorry or trailer. Please contact Alan Shephard, Greenspirit Books, 01985 300274.

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