

Printing History News

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

Number 48 ☆ Autumn 2015

Recent developments at St Bride Foundation

AS NO DOUBT many of you will be aware, news filtered through during the summer that the St Bride Library had closed. Initial shock and disbelief turned to dismay when the rumours were confirmed with the release of the 'Official Announcement' at the end of July, in which it stated that 'due to funding constraints the Foundation regrets that it is no longer possible to keep the printing workshop and library open in the current format. This has meant that the employees working in those departments have had to be made redundant.'

The suddenness of the closure took most people by surprise, and perhaps because of this, puzzlement turned to speculation. Reassurance has been more recently forthcoming with the release of a statement on the St Bride website by the Chief Executive, Glyn Farrow:

The purpose of this statement is to clarify the recent developments at St Bride Foundation and to reassure our supporters and visitors that the Foundation will continue to satisfy its charitable aims and objective into the future.

Many of you will have heard wild stories about the closure of St Bride Library and the Workshop. I am also aware that some people are under the impression that the whole Foundation is closing without further ado and that everything will be sold or given away and that will be the end of the story.

This is simply not true.

For many years, St Bride Foundation has provided a library service which has been a unique beacon in the world of typography, printing history, journalism etc. In more recent years we have been lucky enough to be able to welcome people into the printing workshop where they can learn some of the techniques which feature so prominently in the library.

It will come as no shock to anyone that any form of trading in recent years has not been easy and the Foundation has suffered as much as anyone else. We have not been able to generate the revenue we would have wished, and therefore to continue to provide the, albeit restricted, service on offer in the library and workshop would have been foolhardy.

It was with a genuine sense of sadness and regret that the Foundation decided that it had to make two very well-respected, trusted and key employees redundant and to cease the facilities in the library and workshop until such time as finances permit us to resume our activities. We are engaged in a constant search for funds from individuals, corporations and grant-giving trusts as is every other small charity in the country.

Nothing is going to be sold, other than material already identified as being outside the scope of the charity's activity or being surplus to requirements. Nothing is being given away.

The library, the archive and all the other wonderful items we look after are safe. We always have, and always will, take great care to protect, care for and conserve our collections, and there will be no deviation from this policy.



We have used the term 'moth-balling' as we plan to reopen the collections and our courses again as soon as our financial winter is over. It is true that we will have to adopt a new business model, it is true that there will be a hiatus in proceedings, but this has had to happen in order to maintain and protect the integrity of our collections.

Decisions like this are hard to take. They are equally hard to implement, but not to have done so would have rendered the whole charity vulnerable which is something the Board and I have always and will always take every step to avoid.

As I write (early September) Peter Silver, Chairman of the St Bride Board of Governors/Trustees, writes that 'the Trustees thought long and hard over the decision to temporarily close the library and workshop, both loss-making activities for which we will need to seek funds to resume . . . I can assure you that there are no plans to "sell off the library" as has been stated from some "non Foundation" sources.'

Everyone to whom the Foundation means so much – and that surely is all who share a love of, and concern for, Britain's printing history and heritage – will wish those whose task it now is to attract sufficient funding to ensure its future every success. And some of that responsibility surely resides with each one of us – to drum up support in whatever way we can, in order to ensure that this important organisation not only survives but thrives in the future.

Sixty years ago, in the *British Printer* for March/April 1954, Beatrice Warde wrote of the then Appeal for funding for the St Bride Library. Our generation surely must respond equally generously:

In these days when it normally 'takes money to raise money' in any good cause, the current Appeal for the St Bride Printing Library comes as a reminder that there is still one group of industries and professions that can 'look after its own' with something of the same spontaneity with which the medieval citizens of Chartres helped to trundle-up the stones for their cathedral in the intervals of paying into its building fund. The Appeal has refused to count any chickens before they were hatched; but the warmth of the response so far is indeed worthy of that mighty incubator, the World of Print!

PRINTING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

PHS *Journal*

The next number of the Printing Historical Society *Journal* (number 23) will appear this autumn, and will contain material published to mark the eightieth birthday of James Mosley. In addition to other articles and reviews, there will be Mosley's annotated translation of Jacques Jaugeon's description of the type-founder's mould and its use (originally completed around 1704), a selection of essays from the author's blog, and a revised and updated bibliography of his published and 'distributed' works.

PHS research grants

Printing Historical Society research grants for 2015 have been awarded as follows:

- £1,000 to Drew Thomas for research on printing for the Reformation in Martin Luther's Wittenberg;
- £550 to Vaibhav Singh for research on the introduction of mechanical typesetting in Indian scripts in the 1920s and 1930s;
- £415 to Benito Rial Costas for research on the breviaries and missals printed by Christopher Plantin for the Spanish crown.

PHS anniversary keepsake

The keepsake prepared to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the PHS (which fell in 2014) is at last complete and will be circulated with this number of *Printing History News*. It represents the culmination of long labour by the editor/printer, with printed contributions from Martin Andrews, Michael Daniell, Andrew Dolinski, Nick Gill, Alan Hardie, Stan Nelson, Pia Östlund and Charles Whitehouse, a specially-commissioned engraving by Brian Hanscomb and a woodcut by Margaret Lock. A little over 300 copies have been completed, and these are being sent to those individual members of the PHS who were enrolled at the time of last year's anniversary conference.

Institutional members who would like to receive a reproduction of the work should contact Paul W. Nash,

at 19 Fosseway Drive, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire GL56 0DU.
E-mail: paul@strawberrypress.co.uk.
No copies will be for sale. It is hoped to publish a short account of the printing of the keepsake on the Society's website in the near future.



Update on the 1907 Cossar press

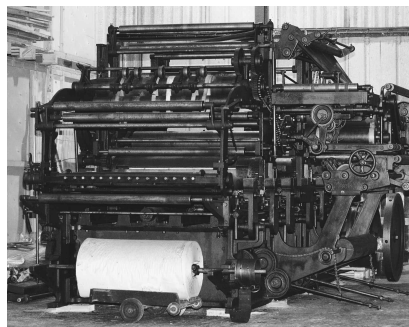


Photo courtesy of National Museums Scotland

The 1907 Crieff 'Cossar Patent Flat Bed Newspaper Printing Machine' remains in temporary storage in Govan, close to the childhood home of its inventor, Thomas Cossar.

This unique and significant printing machine is believed to be the oldest working reel-fed flatbed printing press in Britain, and the only example of the original design. It has now been reconstructed and will move to the National Museums Collections Centre in Edinburgh once current development plans are in place.

The Trust led on the fundraising effort to ensure that the press could be saved from scrap, and then returned to working order once it had been removed from the premises of David Philips Printers in Crieff.

Thanks to generous donations from the National Printing Heritage Trust, the Scottish Newspaper Society, Unite the Union and the Oxford Guild of Printers, as well as individual donors, the future of the Crieff Cossar is now assured.

If you are interested in seeing this press printing again, then become a member of the 1907 Cossar Club:

1907cossarclub@gmail.com
www.cossarprintclub.org.uk

H. BERNULF CLEGG, CHAIRMAN

NPHT plans for a National Museum of Printing

Since its foundation in 1990 one of the aims of the National Printing Heritage Trust has been the establishment of a National Museum of Printing in the United Kingdom. This has, so far, proved impossible to realise. But the aim remains, and the Trust has begun to formulate a plan for such a Museum, at meetings of a sub-committee held in 2014 and 2015.

So far the outline of a plan for the content, scope and structure has been discussed, and the practical questions of what would excite public interest, what scholars and printing historians would expect of a National Museum, and what exists already by way of realia and archives which could form the basis of a national collection have been discussed.

Further meetings will be held to examine possible location, funding, promotion and a statement of why the Museum would be important to the nation, to education and the general public. By this means it is hoped to evolve a complete and practical plan for a National Museum of Printing, albeit at this stage only on paper, with the hope that in time a paper plan might form the basis for a bricks-and-mortar institution.

The next meeting will be held in October 2015, and anyone who would like to support this project is invited to approach the Trust, with the possibility of joining its Advisory Committee (expressions of interest are always welcomed by the Secretary; see page 4).

The Butler & Tanner Story

One of Frome's best-known businesses, the printers Butler & Tanner, closed in 2014 after a long and illustrious past. A book has been written in tribute to all those in the town who made a valuable contribution to the printing trade during their years with the firm. Documenting the history of the company, *The Butler and Tanner Story*, written by Lorraine Johnson and published by Frome Society for Local Study, is now available priced at £12 (excluding packing and postage); it can be purchased from the society's website (www.fsls.org.uk), from Frome Heritage Museum (www.fromemuseum.wordpress.com) and from Hunting Raven Bookshop, Cheap Street, Frome (www.huntingravenbooks.co.uk).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Fine Press Book Fair

The 2015 Fine Press Book Fair will be held at Oxford Brookes University, Gypsy Lane, Oxford, on Saturday 31 October (11am–6pm) and Sunday 1 November (10am–5pm). More than eighty fine and private presses, as well as specialist booksellers, suppliers of paper, type, binding materials and printing sundries, and a range of societies, will be exhibiting.

The Fair will also serve as a market for secondhand printing supplies and equipment.

As usual, there will also be a programme of lectures on the Sunday. Admission is by catalogue (price £5), valid for both days. For further details please see the FPBA website www.fpba.com (and click on the FPBA Events tab).

'Words on Paper'



The 37th Annual Conference on Book Trade History will be held on Sunday 29 and Monday 30 November 2015 at Stationers' Hall, Ave Maria Lane, London EC4M 7DD.

Entitled 'Words on Paper', this year's conference will explore the uses of manuscript and print in the communication of ideas and information across four centuries. Leading scholars in the field will present original papers, drawing evidence from different countries and different historical periods.

For more information and booking details, email secretary@aba.org.uk.

Italic 500 Exhibition

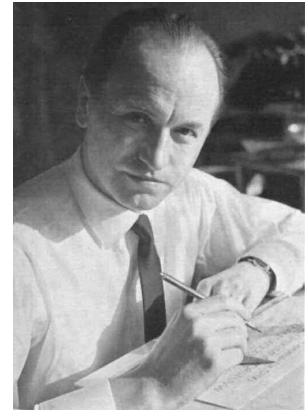
A new exhibition, 'The Origins of the Script and its First and Later Typographic Form', will open at the Type Archive (100 Hackford Road, London SW9 0QU) on 29 October 2015. An illustrated catalogue, with an introduction by Nicolas Barker, will be available at the exhibition and separately from the Archive.

OBITUARIES

Hermann Zapf

With the death in June this year of Hermann Zapf, the world of printing lost not only one of the greatest type designers of the twentieth century, but also one who understood the soul and spirit of good quality bookwork.

Accounts of his life and works are freely available on the internet, so we will devote space in this newsletter to two extracts that sum up his life. The first, from a promotional flyer for Palatino from the Stempel typefoundry dated 1958:



Zapf . . . based his designs for Palatino on the lettering of the Italian calligrapher G. B. Palatino, a contemporary of Claude Garamond. The italic is in the true tradition of the Renaissance, and is eminently suitable for the setting of poetry and as a display type in advertising and bookwork. Its pen-drawn characteristics give it an original, fresh appearance, while retaining dignity and beauty. With Palatino, Hermann Zapf has created a type of classical design, and with the enduring appeal of the great works of the sixteenth century – the century of Leonardo da Vinci and Erasmus of Rotterdam.

And his own words about printing from his article 'Printing Types and Books' in *Penrose Annual*, 1962:

Even today, though 500 years have passed, we look with great respect at the 42-line Bible of Gutenberg or at the Latin Psalter printed by Fust & Schoeffer which we admire as the great masterpieces of the art of printing. We know very little about the ideas and reflections by which Gutenberg and his contemporaries were guided when creating their printing types and books, and we seldom realise how simple, almost primitive, were the circumstances in which they had to perform their task. We especially admire the harmonious structure of their work which we are unable to emulate, despite the refined technical aids we now have at hand. The secret of the early prints can hardly be found in the quality of the printing techniques of that time, since we can reach the same level nowadays. There must be some secret in the workshops of that time which has since been lost.

This issue of the *Newsletter* has been set in two of Zapf's most enduring typefaces: Palatino for the text, and Optima for the headings. Also used are a few ornaments from his suite of dingbats.



Toby English

It is with great sadness that we record the death on 25 July of Toby English who was the manager for some years of the Oxford Fine Press Book Fair.

Toby started selling books while a student to fund his book-buying. He was a full-time bookseller for 35 years and his wife Chris joined him as a partner in the business over 20 years ago. Toby owned a very popular bookshop and was a regular at PBFA bookfairs. Toby died only two months after closing his bookshop in Wallingford, which he ran for over thirty years.

LETTERS

Where is printing history being taught?

Eric Kindel writes: 'Michael Twyman alerted us to a call to readers of *Printing History News* to report where the teaching of printing history is taking place. We thought it would be appropriate to send a short description in reply, relating to the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication at the University of Reading.

The Department of Typography & Graphic Communication at the University of Reading teaches printing history throughout its degree programmes and beyond. Undergraduate students take modules in the history of graphic communication that cover the history of printing from Gutenberg to the present day, including demonstrations of hand presses for letterpress (metal and wood type, woodcuts and wood-engravings), intaglio (copper engravings and etchings) and lithography. Aspects of printing history are also addressed in optional modules about ephemera studies (includes print identification), the history of letterforms and typography (includes the context of printing methods), and design and creative print production (includes the study of twentieth-century print production). Postgraduate students take part in weekly themed sessions focusing on historical printed matter, within which printing methods are an important sub-theme. Students at all levels complete dissertations that often give an important place to aspects of printing history. The Department also benefits from its collections and archives relevant to the history of printing. These are used extensively by staff and students in teaching and learning, by researchers visiting from all over the world, and in professional development courses convened by members of staff. Materials include comprehensive ranges of printed examples, print production artefacts, and printing equipment and presses, both historic and reconstructed.'

Georgina Grant, Curatorial Officer, Blists Hill Victorian Town, writes: 'In response to the question "Where is printing history being taught?" in the most recent *Printing History News*, I thought I would write in to say that printing history is taught at Blists Hill

Victorian Town in Ironbridge. I also replied to the earlier question in *PHN* of "Where is printing being taught?": my answer for both questions is pretty much the same! It is taught in several ways:

- as a historical practice, where demonstrators in our Printers exhibit show visitors how a printing press works, and describe the life of a printer in 1900. We have a Columbian, a Wharfedale and a Cropper press in the exhibit;
- through museum interpretation – all posters on the 52 acre site are produced by the printers. The posters not only reveal historical news and advertising, but also make visitors aware of how information was disseminated in the Victorian era.'

Monotype Recorder

John Trevitt writes in response to an item in the Summer *PHN*: 'Although I still trade in typographical stuff, I've given up aiming or even hoping to compile a catalogue of the *Monotype Recorder*.'



Old school presses

The editor's lifetime of involvement with printing started as a schoolboy in the old air-raid shelter that was Wallasey Grammar School Press. Throughout the middle years of the twentieth century many schools ran their own press, and he has set out on a quest to record as many as he is able before knowledge of their former existence is lost for ever. If readers know of any former school presses, please let him know.

News from Juniper Press

The recently established printing heritage studio in Liverpool's Bluecoat has received generous sponsorship from two local printing companies: LT Print and Tipografic, both located in Wirral.

This support serves not only as recognition of the strong foundations and principles on which the Press is based, but will also enable the Press to take another step forward in its longer-term goal to become a regional centre for printing heritage in the north-west of England.

Gwasg Gregynog is printing again

Following a long period of silence, Gwasg Gregynog, one of Britain's oldest private presses, is printing again. Its new publication is *Llys Glyndŵr*, a bilingual version of Iolo Goch's *cywydd* on Sycharth, the court of Owain Glyndŵr, one of the finest Welsh poems of the fourteenth century.

The book is designed by Professor Robert Meyrick and by David Vickers, who also handset the text in Monotype Bembo and Perpetua, and was printed by hand in four colours on a Soldans Proofmaster cylinder press. Zerkall mouldmade paper was used for the ordinary edition, and dampened handmade Batchelor Kelmscott paper, produced specially in 1935 for the Gregynog Press's *The Story of the Red-Deer*, for the quarter-leather copies.

It is to be hoped that this is the start of a new era for the Press, which appears to have suffered from lack of support in recent years.

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