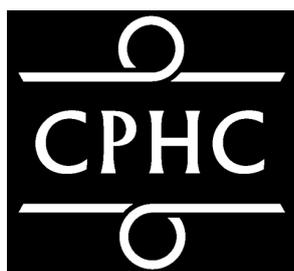


# Printing History News

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

Number 49 ☆ Winter 2015/16

## Launch of the Centre for Printing History and Culture



The Centre for Printing History and Culture, a joint initiative between Birmingham City University and the University of Birmingham, was launched at an event entitled 'Imprinting the Centre' at Winterbourne House, Birmingham, on 25 November 2015. The Centre consists of academics, curators, librarians and printers, and seeks to encourage research into all aspects and periods of printing history and culture, as well as education and training into the art and practice of printing.

Caroline Archer, Professor of Typography at BCU, described how Birmingham is the ideal city from which a Centre of international renown can be developed. 'Through Birmingham's connections with John Baskerville, the city became the centre of European printing during the mid-eighteenth century . . . for three centuries the city's printers, type-founders, engravers, bookmakers, newspaper makers and typographic educators have combined to make the region not only a local but also a national and international typographic force.'

While these local connections and histories provide a rich base for the Centre, its associates and members harbour ambitions that are national and international in scale. In 2016 the Centre will be running international symposia on the 200th anniversary of the sans-serif (see below) and the 90th and 30th anniversaries of the General Strike and the Wapping dispute, and in 2017 it will host a two-day conference entitled 'Printing History and Culture Rebound'.

At the launch party, Christopher Hill, a research fellow appointed to the Centre by BCU, drew parallels between the advent of printing and that of desktop publishing and the internet. 'Before printing, a century seemed like a thousand years,' he claimed, echoing the words of Henry David Thoreau. 'Desktop publishing and the internet have served to collapse time and space in a similar way.' In doing so, it has also supplanted print and jeopardised the printing industry, but Chris and Caroline remain convinced of the need to study printing history and culture. 'The onset of the digital age does not render the study of printing history and culture obsolete; it reinforces it,' they argued.

The website ([www.cphc.org.uk](http://www.cphc.org.uk)) of the Centre was also unveiled at the launch party and showcases a range of projects and expertise. Follow the Centre through Twitter (@CPHC\_15) or its website if you would like to be kept updated on its activities and events.

### 'The Song of the Sans-serif'

This is the title of a conference to be held at Birmingham City University on 30 September 2016, when the Centre will be celebrating the bicentenary of the sans-serif through a one-day symposium and accompanying exhibition. Speakers are invited to address aspects of the development, use and impact of the sans-serif from the nineteenth century and beyond.

The Conference organisers are inviting contributions from academics, research students, independent scholars and practitioners working in the realms of printing history and culture, typography and type design, social and industrial history and other related topics.

Please send a suggested title, synopsis (200 words) and biography (100 words) via a Word attachment to both [caroline.archer@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:caroline.archer@bcu.ac.uk) and [david.osbaldestin@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:david.osbaldestin@bcu.ac.uk) by 31 January 2016.

## Latest statement from St Bride's

Following the much-publicised closure of the St Bride Foundation library, limited access to the unique collection has now been put in place. Those wishing to gain admission should contact the Foundation to make arrangements, with the library open by private request for a fee to cover the associated costs. A wide range of activities is running at the Foundation alongside, with printing workshops at all levels, and private tours of the buildings and its artefacts. Discussions are under way with the Heritage Lottery Fund to bring St Bride's listed Victorian home into the twenty-first century so that it can be accessible to all, and a fundraising campaign seeks to raise the money needed to partner with this. But as it enters its 125th year, St Bride Foundation is also considering how it can most effectively serve the communities around it and the printing industry with which it has been for so long associated. The Trustees have embarked on a period of consultation to which all are invited to contribute views and suggestions through emailing [info@sbf.org.uk](mailto:info@sbf.org.uk).

## PHS Journal

The Autumn 2015 number of the *Journal* has been slightly delayed, but will be distributed to members in early 2016. It is a special number marking the 80th birthday of James Mosley in 2015, and contains material by and about Mr Mosley. Papers will include his translation of, and commentary upon, Jacques Jaugeon's description of the typefounder's mould (written in French around 1704 and never before published), and revised versions of his blog-posts on large brass matrices, drawing the typefounder's mould, Garamond (or Garamont), type body sizes compared, the copying of relief blocks by dabbing, and Caslon's Long Primer No. 1 and No. 2 types. The number will be completed with a revised and expanded version of Stephen Tuohy's bibliography of Mosley's published and circulated work.

### From the editor

For over 500 years the craft of printing has helped shape the civilised world which we inhabit today, and it is essential that we – many of whom have experienced the transition of printing from hot-metal letterpress, through photosetting and offset-litho, to today's digital processes (a transition equal to or even greater than that from medieval scribes to movable type) – safeguard not only the equipment and materials which tell that story, but also the techniques that go with it.

This may well be our last opportunity to do this, for the generation of printers of which I am a member – the generation that was taught the skills which originated in the fifteenth century but which has also seen those skills almost die out to be replaced by computer and digital technology – will one day be gone. And once we are gone, who will be there to understand and operate the machinery and equipment which will, thanks to bodies such as the Printing Historical Society and National Printing Heritage Trust, survive for far longer than we will?

The Trust has benefited in the past from committee members who have given freely of their time and energies to achieve much that is commendable and worthwhile; however, new and equally enthusiastic folk are now needed to ensure the Trust's continuing vitality and to take over from those who, for various reasons, need to take a 'back seat' in the future. Such new and active participants, who will share their time and energy to keep the NPHT going in such a way that its objectives and aims are truly fulfilled, will be warmly welcomed by the committee.

### From *British Printer* 125 years ago

'While it is true that many American typefounders have gone to the extreme of foisting upon the British trade a number of fantastic, unserviceable typeface designs, under the misnomer of "art faces", British typefounders have doggedly clung to the antediluvian monstrosities which should have been consigned to the tomb of the Capulets long years ago. The plea so often put forth, that the British public are opposed to all innovations . . . is a poor compliment alike to their taste and intelligence.'

### Print Networks' call for papers

The 19th Print Networks' conference, to be held 11–12 July 2016 at the Moore Institute, National University of Ireland, Galway, will have as its theme 'British and Irish Print Networks'. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Ireland became increasingly integrated within a British economic and political space. After 1801, Ireland formed part of the United Kingdom and it supplied both food and labour power to industrialising Britain. The same pattern appears in the domain of print: in the eighteenth century, Dublin printers specialised in reprinting or pirating British books, for transatlantic as well as Irish readers. After 1801 they became agents of English and Scottish publishers, and print workers joined the ranks of larger British trade unions. At the same time, Ireland developed its own print networks in the USA and Canada, exporting books and periodicals produced independently of Britain in the indigenous market.

Speakers are invited to address the dynamics of the relationship between the print trade in Ireland and its counterparts to England, Scotland and Wales, over an expansive period from the early modern through the nineteenth century and beyond. Proposals about Ireland and the Atlantic book trade are also welcome.

The conference encourages papers from scholars (independent and affiliated), librarians and practitioners working on the history of the book, printing and typography, the book trade, and related topics.

Abstracts of up to 200 words are invited for papers of 30 minutes, sent to [printnetworks2016@gmail.com](mailto:printnetworks2016@gmail.com) by 17 January 2016.

### 'Graphic Explorations in Print'

This exhibition at the National Print Museum, Dublin, is a showcase of work produced by graphic design students at Distillers Press (National College of Art & Design) from 1983 until the present day. The Press has a number of operational letterpress proofing presses and a large collection of metal and wooden type. Curated by Seán Sills, custodian of the Press during that period, the exhibition encompasses posters, books and a collection of ephemera. The National Print Museum has had strong links with Distillers Press over many years, working on collaborative projects, and is delighted to host this exhibition, which has been made possible with the generous support of Irish Design 2015.



### Fourteenth- and fifteenth-century German colour woodcuts at the British Museum

A display of the British Museum's collection of sixteenth-century German colour woodcuts will be on show at the Museum, Room 90, until the end of January 2016.

This display of colour printmaking in Germany spans the first attempts to incorporate colour into woodcuts in the early 1400s through the revival of classical forms and learning in the Renaissance and the Reformation of the 1500s, up to the decline of woodcut around 1600. It shows that colour printing was integral to the emerging aesthetic of the press in German Renaissance book, print and visual cultures.

Early German colour prints are now considered rare because comparatively few impressions have survived. In their day, however, they were commonplace, with thousands of them in circulation for uses as diverse as illustrating books to decorating furniture.

This display is curated by Elizabeth Savage (British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow). It coincides with the publication of the first handbook of early colour-printing techniques, *Printing Colour 1400–1700*, which she edited with Ad Stijnman (see page 4).

The unusual printing techniques represented, including two woodcuts with gold printing ink before 1520, may be of special interest to members of the Printing Historical Society.

## Adrian Frutiger: 24 May 1928–10 September 2015



Adrian Frutiger, one of the twentieth century's most talented and respected typographers and type designers, died in September 2015, aged 87. I encountered Frutiger's work on my first day as a composing apprentice in the summer of 1966: Unifers types had been out for only a couple of years, and the company to which I was apprenticed had recently bought the whole family and was using it for almost every job – so from the beginning of my career I was acquainted with this very clean and modern-looking face, quickly learning the difference between '689' and '685', and even now preferring it to Helvetica.

During his lifetime, Frutiger designed a couple of dozen typefaces, his best-known being Unifers, Meridien, Avenir and Frutiger. John Dreyfus, writing in 1961, said of Unifers: 'The design represents a labour of love . . . here at last is a complete sans-serif series, conceived as a unity to meet the diverse needs that were inadequately met by the assorted grotesques which Frutiger found in the cases he handled as a compositor. In drawing the letters, Frutiger has brought into play his sensitive appreciation of the history and practice of type design and manufacture.'

In an interview given in early 1962, as he was completing his work on Unifers, Frutiger said: 'I am not a printer [although he began his career in a small printing firm] . . . I do not experience the pleasure of playing with the end-product. I carry into my work a liking for sculpture, a means of expression based on substance and light . . . it is the plastic quality of typography that appeals to me, the sharp contact between the lead and the paper.'

He went on to say, when asked about the creation of Unifers: 'Every kind of type reveals the essential characteristics of its time. The sumptuous lines of the carriages of the eighteenth century blend with the types of that era: these forms suited their age. Functional considerations dictated the lines of the jet plane, and its beauty ought to be reflected in the type characters created at the present time. Our own age seems to have found its expression in concrete, but modern concrete buildings are not just geometrical: the forms have become supple and alive. Constructed on geometrical foundations, a type character must be allowed free play in its lines, thus enabling the different letters to harmonise in their expression and to endow the word, the line and the page with a coherent structure.'

*Note from the editor:* this issue of PHN uses Frutiger's 1955 seriffed face Meridien for the text, and Unifers for the headings and for this obituary.

## Heritage of the Printed Book Database

The Heritage of the Printed Book Database (previously called the Hand Press Book Database) is a steadily growing collection of files of catalogue records from major European and North American research libraries covering items of European printing of the hand-press period (c.1455–c.1830) integrated into one file. This makes it possible for information to be retrieved in one single search across all files.

New files are added to the HPB Database each year. The majority of these files consist of high-level bibliographical records created by book-in-hand cataloguing. Some files contain records created as a result of retroconversion

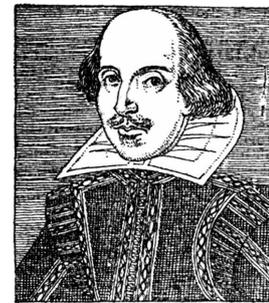
projects, and these are gradually being replaced by sections of enhanced records. The entire system benefits from a unique spirit of international co-operation.

The HPB Database is of interest to librarians and anyone else with academic pursuits across many fields of study that use printed books as source material. It is especially valuable for research in intellectual history, social history, and transmission of thought – as well as in the history of printing and the history of the book. It may be accessed for information retrieval and downloading by CERL member institutions, their staff and users (British Library, London; National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh; National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth; University of London Libraries (ULL and UCL); and University of Oxford Libraries).

## Friends of the National Printing Heritage Trust

Members of the Friends of the NPHT are reminded that subscriptions fall due on 1 January. The minimum subscription remains at £10 for individual members and £40 for corporate members. Payment can be made by cheque, made out to the National Printing Heritage Trust, and sent to the Treasurer (contact details on page 4), or by standing order, bank transfer or PayPal (please contact the Treasurer directly to achieve this). It is hoped to issue membership cards again in 2016 to all members of the Friends in good standing at the time of the publication of the next number of *Printing History News*.

## Was Shakespeare a printer?



'Shakespeare Once a Printer and Bookman' is the title of a lecture that was given in Stationers' Hall by Capt. W. Jaggard in the Twelfth Series of Printing Trade Lectures and sumptuously printed by the Shakespeare Press in 1933. The Jaggards were a well-known printing family connected with Shakespeare. The lecture tried to prove that Shakespeare might have been a printer when in London through the Field family, who also had printing connections with Shakespeare. Jaggard quotes some 500 word references in the plays to the world of printing and books; and Shakespeare may have had access to some of the basic books behind his plays through the Fields.

Professor Stanley Wells, a great Shakespeare authority, is doubtful if it went beyond Shakespeare having superintended the printing of the Sonnets. However, Jaggard has this purple passage: 'Any credit for the discovery that Shakespeare once worked as a printer goes to our great trade benefactor, William Blades, author of the *Life of Caxton*, and donor of that superb Printers' Library at St Bride's, standing like an Eddystone Lighthouse over the uncharted rocks of Fleet Street.' Superb the Library may still be, but its future is sadly a bit uncharted just now.

## Printing courses at the Grange, Shropshire

The Grange in Ellesmere is expanding its printing and binding teaching for 2016 in its own bindery and letterpress print workshop. This unique centre for the learning of traditional printing and bookbinding skills offers a range of print and binding residential courses. Other related courses include linocut printing, paper marbling and painting. The Grange also hosts a very popular annual Book Day, free to all, this year to be held on 25 June, where letterpress printing, binding, marbling and other skills will be demonstrated. The press room has a range of restored letterpress machinery – 1864 Albion, Arab and Eagle treadle presses and a Vandercook proofing press, as well as numerous Adanas. Recently added, soon to be under restoration, are two more presses, a Miller & Richards Clyde, and a Cropper. In addition the Grange holds a good range of wood and metal type. The bindery is now fully equipped and can teach up to eight people.

### 2016 courses

*Letterpress Printing:* 17–20 March, 7–10 April, 7–10 July, 20–23 October.

*Bookbinding:* 17–20 March, 7–10 April, 7–10 July, 20–23 October.

*Linocut Printmaking:* 7–9 October.

*Paper Marbling:* 22–24 April, 23–25 September.

*Printing & Binding Open Day:* 25 June.

*Painting courses:* 3–5 June, 10–12 June.

For full details of courses, or if you would just like to visit, please contact the Grange at: [www.thegrange.uk.com](http://www.thegrange.uk.com)

## New Reviews Editor for the PHS Journal

Anne Brady will be retiring as Reviews Editor for the Printing Historical Society's *Journal* at the end of 2015, and the Society is delighted to announce that her successor will be James M'Kenzie-Hall. The PHS is most grateful to Anne for her work over the past three years, and to James for assuming her mantle. There will be a hand-over period between early 2016 and the Annual General Meeting that spring, and publishers or authors with books which they would like to see reviewed in the *Journal* should continue to send them care of the St Bride Library, and to contact the *Journal* via its Editor (see this page).



## 'Wicked Wit': Darly's comic prints exhibition

Pop over to the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin to see an exhibition of over a hundred eighteenth-century hand-coloured etchings by unique husband and wife duo Mary and Matthew Darly.

This printer–publisher team produced well over 500 comic images of caricatures, macaronies (fellows with outlandish fashion tastes) and characters from their London base between 1770 and 1780. At the height of their fame, carriages lined the streets so their occupants could titter and be entertained by the images on display in Darly's Comic Exhibitions, held every spring from 1773 to 1778.

By the end of the decade, they had become so popular that their publications were available throughout Great Britain and Ireland, Europe and even America. The name Darly became synonymous with the humorous images they produced.

On show until 14 February 2016. Admission free.

## School presses

Thank you to all who contacted the editor with information about old school presses. Please continue to feed more information about such presses so that eventually a history of these fascinating printing setups can be put together.

## Wanted

Seeking cases of Bembo (roman and italic) 24pt, 30pt, 36pt; also a benchtop hand proofing press. Please contact the editor in the first instance.

## Printing Colour 1400–1700

In this recently published work, Ad Stijnman and Elizabeth Savage offer the first handbook of early modern colour printmaking before 1700, creating a new, interdisciplinary paradigm for the history of graphic art. The book unveils a corpus of thousands of individual colour prints from across early modern Europe, proposing art historical, bibliographical, technical and scientific contexts for understanding them and their markets.

From the first known attempts in the West, it demonstrates that colour prints were not rare outliers but essential components of many early modern book, print and visual cultures. Discussions of medieval/early modern techniques and printing ink recipes may be of special interest to PHS members. The first printing sold out before the British launch; the second is available now at <http://www.brill.com/products/book/printing-colour-1400-1700>.

## CONTACTS

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### ST BRIDE LIBRARY

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**Librarian:** Post vacant.  
[glyn@sbf.org.uk](mailto:glyn@sbf.org.uk)

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