

Printing History News

The Newsletter of the Printing Historical Society and
Friends of St Bride Library

Number 53 ☆ Winter 2016–17

St Bride Foundation: unearthing buried treasure

What is more important to a library than anything else – than everything else – is the fact that it exists.

I found that quotation by Archibald McLeish while looking for some way to explain to the readers of *PHN* that the St Bride Foundation Library is still here. It hasn't gone. And neither has the Foundation itself. That's still here too, and the lights are burning bright.

I could fill an entire edition of *PHN* with the 'whys and wherefores' of the past 12 months and narrative of the precise moves, but that's for people to read about further down the line. What matters now is that the St Bride Foundation, the Library and the special collections are safe and valued, and that progress is being made.

I should first thank the St Bride Library volunteers, particularly Heather and Bob, whose task it has been to keep the lights on when there was only the faintest pulse, and for their guidance on where to apply what resources we have. With financial help from our friends at Stationers' Company Foundation, we now have an independent and functioning library management system and a catalogue that will hopefully be publicly available from mid-January. The Library will also open twice a month from January, on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, with late opening until 8pm. For those who are interested in greater detail, we are also examining the list of periodicals with a view to restarting the most relevant ones.

All of the above are smallish but significant moves that reflect my commitment to getting the Library into a more functional state. In the eight months since taking over as General Manager there has barely been a day without something amazing coming to light in the treasure chest that is the St Bride Foundation, from finding spectacular

1920s railway posters, to learning, as I did today, that we have Henry Mayhew's original concept notes and sketches for the infamous *Punch* magazine from 1840.

No one that I have shown around has failed to be stunned by the sheer wealth of typographic and printing heritage materials in the Library. It's a collection that, with appropriate care, needs to be seen and be available for appreciation by far more than the current handful of people who have the good fortune to be close to it. Although I'm neither a librarian nor an archivist, I understand enough of both to know that the St Bride Library is of sufficient national importance that it should be a 'Designated' collection. It needs a huge investment of thought, energy and cash to achieve that status, but that should be our direction of travel for the next few years until we have a library that has the recognition it deserves.

The Foundation itself needs to be better known too, and I hope the aims of the National Printing Heritage Trust (now part of the PHS) can be supported in collaboration with a reinvigorated Friends of St Bride and the Printing Historical Society. I'm very much open to discussion and I hope in due course to be able to chat with members of these societies and gain their support for our work. In the meantime, I look forward to realising more of our plans for the St Bride Foundation in 2017.

PAUL JESSOP
General Manager

The Brunswick Map Printers

The formal launch of this new book from Juniper Press describing the clandestine printing of escape maps in a Second World War German prison camp will take place on 26 March at the Bluecoat, Liverpool. Full details of this event and of the book at: <https://thebrunswickprinters.com>.

'The Book: A Cover-to-Cover Exploration'

Books, for the most part, become famous – or infamous – for their content. Whether banned or fêted and cherished, we remember those books that speak most eloquently or most vehemently to us, that stir up our emotions or impart new knowledge. From papyrus scrolls to dime novels, in this talk we shall explore the long and surprising history of the book.

'Everybody who has ever read a book will benefit from the way in which Keith Houston explores the most powerful object of our time. And everybody . . . will agree that reports of the book's death have been greatly exaggerated' (Erik Spiekermann).

St Bride Foundation, 23 March 2017, 7pm; tickets: £8–£12.50.

'From Craft to Technology and Back Again: print's progress in the twentieth century'

During the twentieth century the printing industry underwent considerable change as it shifted from being craft-based to technology-led, largely as a result of three major revolutions. In the composing room there was a move from hand to machine composition followed by phototypesetting and finally digital means; while in the press room printers experienced a shift from letterpress to offset lithography and latterly digital methods of production.

This event will examine these and many other aspects of change in the printing industry during the last century.

Guest speakers: Professor Michael Twyman, University of Reading; Dr Nicola Gordon Bowe, National College of Art & Design.

30–31 March 2017, National Print Museum, Dublin. Two-day tickets £98; one-day tickets £71. Tickets are available from the PHS website.

Society matters

New subscription rates

Members of the PHS and regular subscribers to the Society's *Journal* should already have received an announcement by letter of the new subscription rates that will apply from 1 January 2017. Having held subscription rates steady for 20 years, the Society has been obliged to increase subscriptions due to the substantial increase in the cost of distribution of its publications. The new rates are as follows:

- UK individual members: £37.50
- UK institutional subscribers: £52.50
- UK student members: £15
- Non-UK individual members: £45
- Non-UK institutional subscribers: £60
- Non-UK student members: £30

The new rates are now advertised on the Society's website.

During 2017 the Society expects to introduce new categories of membership with the aim of building up funds for the Society's grant-awarding and other charitable activities. Prompted in part by the recent merger of the Printing Historical Society and the National Printing Heritage Trust, the introduction of these new categories will require a change in the Society's constitution. Society members will therefore be asked to approve the change at the next Annual General Meeting (date, in May or June 2017, yet to be announced). Further information on these proposals can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, whose email address can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Co-option of new Membership Secretary

At their meeting in October the Committee of the Printing Historical Society co-opted Dr Rachel Stenner as Membership Secretary. Rachel will gradually be taking over responsibility for communication with members other than through the Society's publications.

Rachel lectures in Renaissance Literature in the School of English at the University of Sheffield and researches early modern print culture. She has a particular interest in fictional depictions of the print trade and printers' life-writing. Her role is to oversee the administration of membership applications and to represent members' issues. Rachel can be contacted here: rachel.stenner@sheffield.ac.uk

Society seeking a Treasurer and a book-keeper

The Printing Historical Society is still looking for one or two people to take on the important roles of Honorary Treasurer and book-keeper, roles so ably filled by Andrew Dolinski until his retirement in May 2016.

The Hon. Treasurer, who must be a member of the Society, would have overall responsibility for:

- reporting on the Society's financial position to Committee meetings (twice yearly);
- presenting the Society's accounts to the Annual General Meeting;
- liaising with the Society's independent examiner over the preparation of annual accounts; and
- submitting annual returns to the UK Charity Commission.

The book-keeper, who can be any person with the necessary book-keeping skills, would have day-to-day responsibility for maintaining the financial records of the Society.

While the roles might be filled by a single person, as has been the case hitherto, the Society recognises that it may be easier to split the roles. The Society's Committee is willing to consider the option of paying a fee to a freelance book-keeper. Anyone who feels able to fulfil either role should contact the Hon. Secretary.

PHS *Journal*

The most recent number of the *Journal* of the Printing Historical Society (new series number 24) was issued to members in September, and will be followed very soon by number 25.

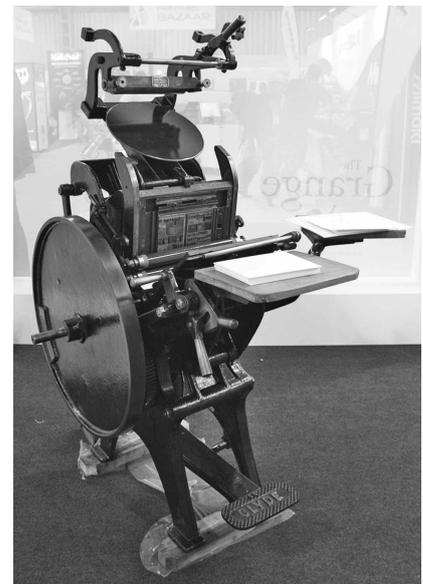
This number has been guest-edited by Claire Bolton and contains papers on 'The Long Survival of the Wooden Handpress in Belgium' by Patrick Goossens, 'A Note on Interlinear Spacing at the University Press, Oxford, 1670–1780' by Martyn Ould, 'Scaleboard: The Material of Interlinear Spacing Before "Leading"' by Paul W. Nash, 'Typecases' by David Bolton, and 'Reconsidering a Conclusion: Were the Earliest Types Cast or Cut to Type-height?' by Stan Nelson. Several papers are also in hand for the *Journal* in 2017, but submissions are always welcome, and should be sent to the Editor (contact details on page 4).

PAUL W. NASH

Phillips's Lithographic Notebook

The facsimile of John Phillips's lithographic notebook, so long in the pipeline, should have been issued to members by the time this *PHN* is published. It consists of a full facsimile and transcription of the notebook (written between 1817 and 1819 and outlining the young Phillips's experiments with lithography), with an introduction, notes and appendices by Michael Twyman. The book has been issued free to members of the PHS, in lieu of a number of the Society's *Journal* (which has been behind-hand for some years but is now, at last, up to date). Additional copies may be purchased from the Society at the members' price (see www.printinghistoricalsociety.org.uk/publications/).

PAUL W. NASH



Restored Clyde press

Just twelve months ago we were invited by a printer in Coventry to take charge of a Clyde platen press that was in need of total restoration.

With some effort, therefore, we completed the work in time to put the press on display on our stand at the Print Show at the NEC in Birmingham in October, where it gained many admirers, many of whom printed a special keepsake on the press.

We have had many years experience with platen machines, but this Clyde, made by Miller and Richard in about 1920, is the only one we have come across. Does anyone know of others?

JON WARD-ALLEN & KEN BURNLEY



Bodleian event celebrates hand-printed sonnets from around the world

Celebrations of the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death continued during the autumn when the Bodleian Libraries marked the conclusion of its Sonnets 2016 project, which invited printers around the world to submit hand-printed copies of each of Shakespeare's 154 sonnets.

Printers took up the challenge with great enthusiasm and newly printed sonnets arrived at the Bodleian from more than a dozen countries, and in languages ranging from Armenian and Polish to Scots and Welsh.

This unique collection of sonnets was welcomed into the Libraries' collections at a special event in the Weston Library on 10 November. Members of the public, local school pupils and some of the participating printers joined Simon Armitage, the University of Oxford's Professor of Poetry, for the event, titled 'Sonnets Alive'. Armitage welcomed this unique collection of hand-printed sonnets into the Bodleian's historic collections.

Many of the printers who responded to the sonnet printing challenge enlisted the help of artists to decorate their sonnets, with subjects including human figures, Shakespeare himself, birds, flowers and an unusual 'scaly ant eater' called a pangolin. Some sonnets are printed on special paper, including paper that the printers made themselves. Others made typographical designs using coloured inks, different typefaces, ornaments and novel arrangements of the type in a spiral pattern. Submissions came from a range of printers, including individuals printing at home, to school pupils, non-profit organisations and university departments.

The Bodleian has a long-standing commitment to preserving the craft of hand-press printing. The Bodleian Bibliography Room, based in the Old Schools Quadrangle, is a hand-press printing workshop that offers workshops to schools, visiting groups and members of the public.

Bodleian staff based at the workshop also contributed a sonnet to the project. They chose to print Sonnet 59 since in it Shakespeare says 'Show me your image in some antique book', which

alludes to the kind of historic gems that have been collected by the Bodleian over the last 400 years.

For more information about the sonnet-printing project, including photographs and a list of all participating printers, visit: <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/csb/sonnets2016>

For more information about the Bodleian's hand-press workshop, which offers classes to schools and the members of the public, visit: <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/csb/bibpress>

Musée de l'Imprimerie de Limoux

Just south of Carcassonne, in France, Jean-Claude Laffont, together with his wife Andrée, have run a printing museum in the small wine town of Limoux for several years.

Monsieur Laffont began as an apprentice printer in the Toulouse region and then as a typographic compositor for printing firms at Carcassonne and in the Dordogne region. He then worked on a newspaper at Rodez.

In 1996 he was inspired to start saving the machines which were fast disappearing as printing technology changed.

In 1998, together with many printing colleagues, he started an association with the idea of creating a Printing Museum (Les Amis du Musée de l'Imprimerie, des Arts Graphiques et de la Communication). After seeking a home for his ever increasing collection, the mayor offered a site under the old law courts beside the river at Limoux.

The permanent collection comprises many machines, a Linotype, a studio of compositors' materials, posters, binders' tools, engraving tools and other machines.

The plan for the next few years is for the museum to move – to an old tile-making factory across the river at Limoux, where there is more space available for displaying the printing machines in chronological order – and become part of a proposed cultural centre.

Before travelling to see this museum, it would be advisable to check their website or make a booking to see it privately as opening hours are limited. Please mention *PHN* or *JPHS*.

Berges de l'Aude, 11300 Limoux, France.

Website: www.museedelimprimerie.fr
Telephone 09 63 68 34 54 or mobile 06 82 30 17 04

JAMES M'KENZIE-HALL



Granjon's Flowers: An Enquiry into Granjon's, Giolito's and De Tournes' Ornaments, 1542–86

Robert Granjon was a younger contemporary of Claude Garamont and with him one of the great names in the history of type-design. His typefaces have been studied in some depth, but except for a dozen combinable type-ornaments surveyed by the author previously, his printers' flowers, however elegant and innovative, have attracted only cursory attention.

In this book Hendrik Vervliet examines which 'printer's flowers' may be attributed to Granjon. Building on earlier researches into sixteenth-century vine leaves and Granjon's combinable ornaments, the author describes 103 ornaments with first appearances during Granjon's active life, either in his own publications and at presses of his associates and regular customers or in potential sources, such as Giolito's publications in Venice.

At the end of the author's research, however, it became clear that only about half of them could be attributed to Granjon on more or less sure grounds. The other half seems attributable to ornamentists, as yet nameless, working for de Tournes in Lyons or Giolito in Venice.

Arguments used for attributing flowers to Granjon were: archival references; materials (cast or woodcut); occurrences of punches, matrices, or type; occurrences in publications; instances of non-proprietary use; Granjon's known whereabouts at a first appearance; stylistic criteria.

Oak Knoll Press, 2016, 248 pages, \$65. ISBN: 9781584563556

<http://www.oakknoll.com/pages/books/127576/hendrik-d-l-vervliet/granjons-flowers-an-enquiry-into-granjons-giolitos-and-de-tournes-ornaments-1542-1586#sthash.DilLse4r.dpuf>

PHS 'interacts' with ceramic historians

The third in the series of occasional 'Interactions' workshops was held at the Wedgwood Museum, Stoke-on-Trent, on 22 October 2016. A group of 14 people, comprising ceramic historians, museum curators and printing historians, spent an informative and enjoyable Saturday afternoon discussing many aspects of printed ceramics.

Michael Twyman chaired the event and began by sharing some thoughts about areas of intersection between the histories of printing and ceramics. This stimulated a very lively exchange of information and opinions, enhanced by handling some examples, on paper and on plates (of the ceramic kind), of a range of designs for printed ceramics from the eighteenth century to the present day. Some of those present had worked as ceramics designers and their insights were particularly valuable.

The Wedgwood Museum – a prizewinning building which opened in 2008 – was an ideal setting for the workshop, though time did not allow for a proper visit to the galleries, which is now definitely on my 'to do' list. Those present agreed that the event had been a very useful opportunity to discuss common ground and it was decided that the group should meet again for further 'interaction' and perhaps to organize a one-day conference on this fascinating topic.

The scope of the discussions was surprisingly broad and left many potentially interesting loose ends for future discussion. I would have liked to have heard more about the social and cultural impact of printed ceramics, especially at the cheaper end of the market, such as the once ubiquitous 'blue and white' of willow pattern, Spode's 'Italian' and many other enduringly popular designs – and there was no time to pursue my particular interest in the process by which a design printed on paper, sold by a London print-seller such as Rudolf Ackermann, found its way onto a range of ceramics manufactured in Staffordshire.

Previous 'Interactions' in the series have focused on bookbinding and photography. The workshops are proving to be, as intended, fruitful opportunities for the PHS to act as a catalyst

between printing historians and those with other interests, for whom printing is perhaps a fairly peripheral topic but one which clearly has potential for broader discussion. The next workshop, to be arranged in 2017, will engage with cartographic historians. More information, in due course, from Caroline Archer: caroline.archer@bcu.ac.uk

JOHN HINKS

Desmond Field

Desmond Field, who died on 20 September at the age of 94, was one of the early Trustees of the National Printing Heritage Trust. He will be remembered as one of the Trust's stalwarts who compiled the Directory of all the museums and other institutions having items in their collections relating to printing and related industries. He did this at a time when computers were still in their infancy. The Directory ran to two printed editions, the second being in 2000.

His interest in the history of printing extended to his voluntary work, after he retired, at the impressive John Jarrold Printing Museum at Norwich – a fine museum which surely deserved recognition as a national collection.

Desmond was also very proud of Norwich, where he lived until a few years ago, and my wife and I enjoyed several visits to Norwich where Desmond enthusiastically showed us around his beloved city.

DEREK NUTTALL

Information wanted

I am trying to find out more info on S. Wicklin. He published a booklet entitled *Cave Printers of the Little Orme* and notes that he was a member of your society. Are you able to help me with any information?

DOM HARTLEY

Bembo and Centaur

I am in need of good, clean founts of both Bembo and Centaur, preferably display sizes (14 point upwards). Also a treadle for an Arab platen. Please contact me if you can help! Email: kburnley@btinternet.com

CONTACTS

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: Post vacant.

Membership Secretary: Rachel Stenner, School of English, University of Sheffield, Jessop West, 1 Upper Hanover Street, Sheffield S3 7RA
rachel.stenner@sheffield.ac.uk

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

JPHS Reviews Editor: James M'Kenzie-Hall, 8 Herstmonceux Place, Church Road, Herstmonceux, East Sussex BN27 1RL.
jmkenziehall@yahoo.com

ST BRIDE LIBRARY

Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London EC4Y 8EE.
www.sbf.org.uk

Librarian: Post vacant.
info@sbf.org.uk

Friends of St Bride Library
info@sbf.org.uk

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(incorporated as a sub-committee of the Printing Historical Society)

www.npht.org.uk

Contact: Paul W. Nash.
secretary@npht.org.uk

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Editor: Ken Burnley, 12 Leachway, Irby, The Wirral, Cheshire CH61 4XJ.
kburnley@btinternet.com

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