

NATIONAL PRINTING HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Part of the Printing Historical Society – registered charity number 295885

PRESS RELEASE

Printing Historical Society to Launch a Virtual Museum of Printing

On 28 October 2020, the Printing Historical Society (PHS) Committee approved a proposal, presented by the National Printing Heritage Committee (NPHC), for a web-based ‘virtual’ British Museum of Printing. The objective of the museum will be to ‘bring as much of the nation’s printing-historical resources as possible together on one virtual collective museum site.’ The site will be a platform for print historians, practitioners, and heritage professionals across the nation to contribute data, images, video, and narrative relating to their collections. This concept, developed by Lee Hale, is entirely new and will allow for improved connections, knowledge transfer and potential education and training opportunities. Most importantly, ‘museum’ visitors will engage not just with one virtual museum, but with a range of physical collections from all over the country, many of which would otherwise be inaccessible.

The Museum site will be a project of the NPHC, owned and operated by the PHS, with the Centre for Printing History and Culture (CPHC) on the masthead as an official ‘Founding Sponsor.’ NPHC Chair, Dr John Hinks, says of the project ‘The virtual printing museum has the potential to become a powerful tool to provide support to owners and curators of British printing artefacts all over the country. We want to encourage all individuals and organisations in the UK who hold historic printing presses, artefacts or archives to get in touch and become part of this exciting new initiative’.

The site will be developed and managed by the Museum Steering Group: Lee Hale (Chair), Head of Winterbourne House Museum, University of Birmingham; Dr Paul Nash, bibliographer, printing historian and editor of the *PHS Journal*; Dr Rachel Stenner, Lecturer and Director of Centre for Early Modern and Medieval Studies, University of Sussex; Georgina Grant, Senior Curator, Ironbridge Museums Trust, and Holly Trant, Assistant Librarian, Archives and Local Studies, Bath Record Office. Ex-officio members are Dr John Hinks, Chair of the NPHC and Prof. Caroline Archer, representing the CPHC.

During the last quarter of 2020, the Steering Group raised the funds for phase 1 of the project from a combination of grant funding and private and corporate sponsorship. This enabled them to engage the services of website design company Heritage Creative to begin the process of creating the site. In the next few months, the Steering Group will kick off fundraising efforts to raise the £12,000 needed to complete Phase Two, which will enable the site to go live.

The Steering Group is now collecting the names of individuals and organisations who would like to become site contributors, donors, and sponsors, as well as names of individuals and or organisations that have a general interest in the project. There are many opportunities to become involved and help promote this exciting new PHS initiative. For more information about the virtual British Museum of Printing project, or, indeed, to discuss becoming a donor or sponsor, please get in touch with the NPHC Secretary at nphc@printinghistoricalsociety.org.uk.

Issued 22 January 2021 – not embargoed

Contacts:

Lee Hale, Chair, Museum Steering Group: l.d.hale@bham.ac.uk

Holly Trant, NPHC Secretary: nphc@printinghistoricalsociety.org.uk