



OXFORD GUILD OF PRINTERS

NEWSLETTER

October 2013

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Meeting recall: Letter Press in Cirencester

The talk in October was given by Anthony Eyre who set up and still runs, the Letter Press in Cirencester. He grew up in Hammersmith in a house he later learned had been lived in by William Morris. It was an area with a rich printing history; the Doves Press had been nearby and it had been the home of Eric Gill and Eric Ravilious amongst many other creative people.

At Stoneyhurst College he was surrounded by the artwork of Durer and Rembrandt and followed in the footsteps of Bernard Newdigate and Paul Woodruffe. In the sixth form he was introduced to letterpress printing. For the fine sum of £12.00 Anthony and three others bought the 'in house' Octagon Press which was the proud owner of an 8x5 Adana. On this they proceeded to print anything from record sleeves to business cards and proofs for the Jesuits. They had a thriving business on their hands which obviously stood them in good stead for their future careers.

A job in publishing followed and work for the William Morris Society until his wife, who worked for WH Smith, was moved to Swindon. The security of her job enabled Anthony to set up the Letter Press and the rest, as they say, is history. His wife joined the business in 1988 and together they moved letterpress into the 21st century. Letter Press is now proud to print for the Society of Wood Engravers and artists such as Simon Brett and Miriam Macgregor whilst also supplying John Lewis with personal stationary and local brides their wedding invitations. He no longer uses metal type; all his work is now done from photopolymer blocks.

Having negotiated the purchase of an Albion [Ed: from under the nose of our Chairman] and then its restoration, Anthony set up a press-shop at his old school. Here he teaches occasionally; what comes around goes around.

Anthony left us with his thoughts on the future of private presses; he sees the jobbing printer as a medium by which a more important message can be translated and further that printing may well only survive within the private press movement.

For those of you that missed the talk there's a good article on the Press here: http://www.athomecards.co.uk/The_Art_of_Print.pdf

Christina Kingsmill

Notes from the Chairman

Fine Press Book Fair: I have a few stalwarts who have volunteered to look after the OGP table at the Oxford Fair. If anyone else could offer an hour or two please let me know.

OGP Private Press Prize: Don't forget to submit to this prize (£100) which will be judged during the Fine Press Book Fair in November. Entries (letterpress, eight + pages, published since the last fair) should be handed in to the OGP table by 2:00pm on Saturday. You do not have to be an exhibitor at the Fair. I would accept postal entries but contact me first. I'm grateful to the three judges who have all volunteered: Liz Adams, Susan Allix & Christabel Hardacre.

Guild meetings

Unless otherwise noted, the meetings are held at the Bell in Charlbury, at 7:30 for 8:00p.m. The Bell serves food (as well as drink, naturally) and some members have taken to dining there before meet-ings. If you would like to order food in advance to avoid the rush, please contact Lidia Dhorn on 01608 810278.

2nd & 3rd November

Oxford Fine Press Book Fair. N.B. No meeting on Monday the 4th.

2nd December

The AGM will be followed by a talk by Michael Daniell, *Any Old Iron?* in which he will salvage memories of letterpress, particularly those who offered advice when he bought his first press.

3rd February

Tim Honnor of the Piccolo Press. Details to follow.

Monday 3rd March: Peter

Baldwin: The Delos Press and Philippe Jaccottet.

Monday 7th April

Martin Andrews: Fox Talbot Photographer.

P.T.O

The Arab Press: Starring Graham Moss (Incline Press), filmed by Brian Clark (Balscote Press). This 35 minute film – already seen by some of you – explains the use of the Arab press in a clear, lucid and generally excellent way. The DVD with a letterpress printed cover £10 (£5 to OGP members) plus P&P. Available at the Guild table at the Oxford Fair or from Miles Wigfield.

Glastonbury Free Press Update

The early morning alarm call was greeted with mixed feelings on a Tuesday morning in late June, a day before Glastonbury festival opened its gates. The festival organisers had purchased a Heidelberg Cylinder S from Belgium and the only label not in French was the bold badge of the Plantin Moretus museum in Antwerp. The press sat proud on a specially laid concrete plinth (an unusual sight at the Greenfields site) alongside the Intertype which was deafeningly silent as we entered the tent for the first time on the Tuesday afternoon. That morning the Intertype, had sounded like a shotgun as its operator, Andy Taylor, turned it on for the first time. The motor had blown and an electrician was busy trying to disconnect it from the back of the machine in order that it could be recoiled in the site workshop. Whilst the counter on the Heidelberg was fast approaching 60.000 meaning that the bright red mast heads were about to be ready, the prospect of having to hand-set the paper was making the group of printers look nervous.

It was decided that whilst waiting for repairs we make use of the press and print posters on the remaining newsprint. The gates to the public were opened and a mass of people were now milling around the 'Free Press' tent where prints were given away or exchanged for donations. On rotation the press ran off 'I love the smell of ink in the morning', 'It was only Rock and Roll but we loved it', 'BEWARE the Long Drop' and of course Dennis Gould's 'Worthy Farm' poem which, as soon as printed, were swiped out of the stack and taken to the front tables. As the sun warmed the air each day the queues deepened and the three Farleys manned at the front of the tent were proving as popular as the posters where people were invited to 'ink & print'. An opening at the back of the tent meant that punters were now free to come and take a closer look of the press in action. The festival seemed to have become a magnet for former Heidelberg machine minders, all keen to share their knowledge and experiences, though quieter once invited to take the controls. Despite the appeal of the posters, there was no disguising the disappointment that the Intertype was still standing idle and by Friday, on realizing there was not enough type to hand-set, it was decided that polymer plates would be used to run a Sunday edition of the paper. *Pat Randle*

"Ephemera* on Show" – call for entries

We are repeating this initiative and active Guild members are requested to start making- ready now. An example of your printing offers an opportunity to share your printing enthusiasms with fellow members.

The size should be a single leaf to fit an A5 envelope; there is no topic or restriction on content. 100 copies need to be delivered to me by February 28th; they will then be circulated to all members with the April Newsletter. There is no competitive element; it is an opportunity to display that favourite font or illustration and to generally make a good impression.

Please advise me in advance if you expect to participate - it will be very helpful ...

Peter White, Bouncing Acre Press, 68 Cross Oak Rd, Berkhamsted, HP4 3HZ. Email: whitepj@btconnect.com; telephone: 01442 866223.

*Ephemera, defined by Maurice Rickards, are “the minor transient documents of everyday life”.

Two exhibitions

An Engraver's Progress: Simon Brett – Fifty Years of Wood Engraving: This exhibition will be at the Art Jericho Gallery in Oxford at the same time as the Oxford Fine Press Book Fair. There will be a late opening, aimed at Book Fair participants and visitors on Friday 1 November, till 19:30, to which you are warmly invited.

Art Jericho, King Street, Oxford, 24 October until the 10 November; 11:00-17:00 from Wednesday-Saturday, 13:00-17:00 Sunday.

From Scriptoria to Printing House: This exhibition, curated by Cristina Neagu, together with Rowena Archer and David Rundle, highlights the process of creating new books during the period of transition from manuscript to print.

Open until 29 November in the Upper Library, Christ Church College, Oxford. Fridays: 9:30-1:00 pm; 2:00-4:30 (provided there is a member of staff available in the Upper Library).