



# OXFORD GUILD OF PRINTERS NEWSLETTER

March 2019

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## MEETING RECALL

### Patrick Goossens, 'Saving type: ATF to ATF – the fortunes of type foundries in the 21st century.'

Patrick addressed a massive throng (some two dozen members) in the Guild's new venue, the room upstairs at *The Oxford Retreat*, on the subject of his adventures in collecting printing and typesetting equipment, and attempts to use the latter to cast foundry type (in hard metal, not the soft cheese of Monotype). Having begun to collect on a large scale, he found that, for all the typesetting equipment available in the world, very few people were actually using it to cast type. The ATF (American Type Founders) was the last major concern in America, and when this closed some of the equipment was acquired by Theo Rehak for his Dale Guild typefoundry. Contemplating retirement in 2010, Theo sold half his establishment to Patrick and half to a new business which was established in Salt Lake City; when the latter failed, Patrick was able to acquire the other half and set up his own foundry and matrix-engraving workshop in Antwerp. He was also able to obtain, on long-term loan, the remaining casting equipment of the Stephenson Blake foundry, and bought all the casters, pantographs, engraving machines and other equipment he could find. Thus ATF had metamorphosed into ATF (the Antwerp Type Foundry), more correctly the Letter-kunde foundry.

Patrick travelled the world, picking up equipment and learning the skills of type-making, in Korea, France (from Nellie Gable), England (at the Type Archive) and America (from Theo Rehak and Jim Rimmer). He described and illustrated the process of creating a new metal typeface, from the making of patterns through the cutting of punches and striking of mats, or engraving of mats on the Benton machine, to the various means of casting, in hand- and mechanical-moulds. Patrick passed round his own steel punch, cut at the Imprimerie Nationale, and examples of a copper strike and matrix made from it, as well as engraved matrices and those grown by electrolysis.

The process of making types by the more-modern process of engraving matrices was illustrated, using the revived B42 (Gutenberg) and Doves types as examples. Patrick concluded by saying that 'real' typesetting was again being practiced (and would continue 'on his watch') and by presenting those present with copies of a beautifully-printed pamphlet from his Letter-kunde Press, set in the Trojan type (a 'knock-off' of Morris's Troy type). The text is Theo Rehak's *Message of hope*, his farewell address to the American Typesetting Fellowship on the future of the craft. It was, overall, a fascinating talk, very thoroughly illustrated with slides, and received with joy by the assembled masses of Guild members.

Paul W. Nash

## GUILD MEETINGS

Unless otherwise noted, meetings will be held at The Oxford Retreat in central Oxford at 7:30 for 8:00pm. There is parking nearby in Worcester Street or Gloucester Green Car Parks, with easy access to buses, trains, and the Park & Ride buses.

**29th April:** Matthew Haley of Bonham's: title to be announced.

**May:** No meeting.

**3rd June:** Graham Moss: 'Minding your Ps and Qs: the language of letterpress.'

**1st July:** Sophie Mortimer: 'Sophie's Sketchbooks.'

**August:** No meeting.

**2nd September:** Paul Kershaw: 'Grapho Editions.'

**7th October:** Ed Maggs: 'An object that will stand and will not move.'

**Saturday 2nd November:** Wayzgoose: see over for details.

**2nd December:** A.G.M.

**3rd February 2020:** Simon Lawrence: '40 Happy Years at the Fleece Press.'

Other speakers planned for 2019/20: Richard Falkiner, Graham Twemlow.

## New member snippet

**Philip Allen:** I run a software business on Osney Mead opposite what used to be the Alden Press works. I am a strictly amateur printer but have been printing occasionally since the 1970s. I am struck by how the commercial landscape has changed since then, with the major foundries all now long out of business. I look forward to working with all of you to keep letterpress alive and thriving.

## NOTES FROM MEMBERS

**Press available:** Are you looking for a quirky treadle press, in need of TLC but with all parts in good order, and now in Upper Wolvercote Oxford: Thompson Gem, (an illustration of a similar press can be seen here: [briarpress.org/18580](http://briarpress.org/18580)). Owner needs to re-locate in early April, so please get in touch with Andrew Boag ASAP: [andrew@boag.org.uk](mailto:andrew@boag.org.uk)

# CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

**Meeting recall:** My request to members to volunteer, even at the last minute when you *know* you are going to come to the meeting, has been disappointing. I'm grateful to those who have volunteered so far but the Doodle poll is almost empty for the remainder of the year.

**Ephemera on Show:** At the last count there were **two** contributions. This attempt to disseminate the enthusiasm for letterpress printing amongst our members is liable to founder unless more of you can rustle something up. Go on! Have a go! Deadline: end of April, delivered at the 29th April meeting or posted Margaret Condon.

**Wayzgoose:** There are still tables available for the Wayzgoose on Saturday 2nd November. I went to the FPBA Book Fair at Oxford Brookes at the beginning of the month. Overflow tables were in *side rooms or even upstairs*. Late-comers: you have been warned!

**A Show of Hands:** Tim Jollands, visiting research fellow at Bath Spa University, is inviting letterpress contributions to an exhibition to be held from 27 September to 13 October 2019 at Corsham Court. The work should be inspired by the manicure or printer's fist and include at least one such manicure. Further details from him at the Michael Turner Albion Press Room, Bath Spa University, Corsham Court, Corsham SN13 0BZ, or by email: [t.jollands@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:t.jollands@bathspa.ac.uk) The deadline is 31 May: there is no guarantee that your submission will be accepted. I plan to have a go; if there are like-minded Guild members please get in touch with a view to creating an OGP collection for distribution amongst ourselves. [After my monumental folder for the Guild members' contributions to the Shakespeare Sonnet collection I have eschewed the Melville invitation for fear of offering *Maybe Duck?*]

**Picnic:** Richard Lawrence has kindly agreed to host the picnic at his Oxford residence. A date in late July or early August will be decided and publicised.

# CLASSIFIED NOTICE

A new Classified notice has recently appeared on our website:

[oxfordguildofprinters.com/classifieds/](http://oxfordguildofprinters.com/classifieds/)

## EPHEMERA ON SHOW

There's still time to contribute to the 2019 Ephemera on Show – and we'd really like your contributions. Ideally 150 copies, of whatever you decide to print. Size is your choice too, from business card size to A4 (max), and anything in between. Plain or fancy, words or graphics or both, the choice is yours. We need at least ten contributors for a distribution to be viable, and as of mid-March we are well short. There are some very good printers in the Guild. It would be nice to hear from you. If you are a novice – don't be scared. It is a wonderful learning curve. Margaret would be happy to collect contributions at the next (April) meeting; or post by 5 April to Jane Russ, Hare Cottage, 3 Gibbs Close, Westbury, Wilts, BA13 3DT. Any queries? Contact Margaret on [mail@mmcondon.plus.com](mailto:mail@mmcondon.plus.com).

# CHARLBURY ART SOCIETY: A. W. SEABY

There was a good turn out by Guild members for a meeting of the Charlbury Art Society, with which we have reciprocal arrangements. Martin Andrews gave a characteristically ebullient and learned talk on the artist and illustrator Allen William Seaby (1867-1953). Martin's talk focused on Seaby's woodcuts done in Japanese style, although he ranged more widely, including Seaby's long career as Professor of Fine Art at the University of Reading, his work as a book illustrator and author, and as a very fine painter in his own right. Martin took time to explain the processes of Japanese woodcut, producing a block cut on both sides for a four colour print, carefully registered; the tools of the trade, including goat-hair brushes used to apply the water-based ink, and a bamboo baren, used to rub the back of the paper when laid on the block in order to transfer the coloured image; and numerous examples of completed work. Seaby was renowned for his ability to illustrate birds and ponies (his twin passions) in their natural habitat. Ladybird books, however, rejected one exquisite sketch of galloping ponies – because they thought it too violent for children. Were they getting mixed up with Leonardo's Battle of Anghiari? The drawing had something of that energetic

quality. Martin's book-display included a fascinating book on printed patterns (think book papers), as well as some of Seaby's books on birds and ponies. It was a good evening, and thanks are due to Tony Lloyd (OGP member and Art Society Chair), for making it possible as well as to Martin Andrews for his fascinating talk.

Margaret Condon

