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# The Private Library

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THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE  
PRIVATE LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION

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Vol. 3 : No. 6

April 1961

## The Private Libraries Association

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President: D. J. FOSKETT, M.A., F.L.A.

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# The Private Library

Quarterly Journal of the Private Libraries Association

Hon. Editor: Philip Ward, 28 Parkfield Crescent, North Harrow, Middlesex

Vol. 3 No. 6 April 1961

## Association Affairs

### *Earl Grey's Papers*

Our new publication is of interest to the historian and antiquary as well as to the book collector. It is an introductory survey of "Earl Grey's Papers" by Ronald Doig, an assistant keeper in the Department of Palaeography and Diplomatic of the Durham Colleges.

Divided into two parts, the pamphlet first outlines the scope of the voluminous papers, covering as they do the lives and careers of the first four Earls Grey, and goes on to describe the arrangement of the papers, and the way in which these unique problems are being solved. This account was submitted in an abbreviated form as an article for *The Private Library*, but it was the Council's wish that Mr Doig's contribution should be generally, and separately, available. The price is 2s. 6d., post free.

### *Irish Manuscripts*

Another member, Roger Powell, gave a lecture on "The Binding of the Book of Kells" at Burlington House on Thursday, 2 March. The exhibition there called "Treasures of Trinity College, Dublin" includes four Irish illuminated manuscripts that were all, in fact, rebound recently by Mr Powell. The four volumes of the Book of Kells, the Book of Durrow (rebound in 1954), and the Books of Armagh and Dimma (both rebound in 1957), required totally different treatment, of course, from that accorded to rebinding books of paper, described in this issue by P. E. Hall. Very few modern binders, in Mr Powell's opinion, have a good knowledge of vellum-treatment. In the case of the Book of Durrow, it was possible to establish the original makeup of the quires with considerable assurance, even though the entire book had been cut into single leaves at a much later date. This has great bearing on the argument concerning the provenance of this and others of this group of insular manuscripts. In Mr Powell's opinion, Ireland is clearly indicated.

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# BOOKBINDING AT HOME

by P. E. Hall

LOOKING at a binding by one of the great French or English binders will probably very quickly persuade us that bookbinding is a job for the expert craftsman. This is very largely true, and considerable experience is required to produce work of the highest class. There is no reason, however, why anyone with an aptitude for handwork, who is prepared to spend a few hours weekly, should not become a reasonably competent binder in a year or two. While it is possible to learn the craft from textbooks, it is very much easier to learn from another binder and I would strongly advise the beginner to attend an evening class. In most large towns the Art School or the Printing Department of the Technical College will run classes, and even one evening a week for a couple of years will be sufficient to learn the basic operations. With instruction, not only does one learn more quickly how to perform the various operations, but also what to do when things go wrong.

There are quite a number of textbooks available and the classic is *Bookbinding and the Care of Books* by Douglas Cockerell (Pitman). For the beginner, however, I think the best are Laurence Town's *Bookbinding by Hand* (Faber) and A. W. Lewis's *Basic Bookbinding* (Batsford). If it is not possible to attend classes, Mr Lewis's book is probably the best to start with. For repairing, there is *The Repairing of Books* by Sydney Cockerell (son of Douglas) but repairs to leather-bound books should not be attempted until the basic binding operations have been mastered.

Before I talk about equipment and materials, I think it would be as well to explain a few technical terms. Strictly speaking a book is 'bound' only when the boards are attached directly to the back by means of the tapes or cords on which the book is sewn. Most cloth covered books are 'cased', i.e. the cover is made separately and attached to the book by a piece of mull (stiff muslin) and the endpapers—being machine-sewn there are no cords or tapes. Hand binding is divided into two parts: forwarding, which includes all the actual binding processes, and finishing, which includes lettering and any decoration of the spine or the outside or inside of the covers.

A book is said to be whole- or full-bound when it is completely covered with cloth or leather; half-bound, when the spine and corners are covered with leather and the rest of the boards with cloth or paper; and quarter-bound when the spine only is covered with cloth or leather.

The main styles of binding are as follows:—

Pamphlet—A single section book covered with whole or quarter cloth.

Cloth casing—This has already been described.

Library style—A hardwearing binding in which each board is made up from two thicknesses of strawboard which are glued together with the tapes on which the book has been sewn between them. The book is then usually covered either with cloth or quarter leather.

There are two main styles of leather binding:—

Flexible style—The book is sewn on cords, the ends of which are laced into the boards. When the leather cover is attached these cords form ridges across the

spine (raised bands). This is one of the oldest binding styles and is generally considered the best.

Hollow back style—Here the cords are let into grooves sawn in the backs of the sections. A flattened tube of paper is glued to the spine before the leather cover is attached so that when the finished book is opened the leather on the spine is not creased. If the appearance of raised bands is required, false bands are glued to the spine before covering. This style is not so strong as a flexible binding but it is much quicker to sew, and the fact that the spine leather is not creased on opening is an advantage where there is much decoration on the spine.

Another advantage in joining a class is that you can get your equipment together gradually. There is a certain minimum of equipment which you cannot do without and while some of this will have to be bought new, some may be bought second-hand and some you will probably be able to make yourself. (I realize that it may be difficult to visualize some of the equipment described but most of it is illustrated in the textbooks.) The most important pieces of equipment are two presses, a standing press and a lying press. The first of these, which is used for flattening the sections before sewing, pressing the book before covering, and many other jobs, is rather expensive if bought new, but fortunately an excellent substitute for the home binder is one of the old office copying presses. One of these may often be picked up for about £1 at a second-hand shop and its only disadvantage is that when fully open there is only about 4 inches of 'daylight'. The lying press consists of two pieces of wood 2-3 feet long and 4-6 inches square cross-section which is screwed together with long metal or wooden screws. It is used for holding the book during such operations as backing and edge-gilding, and in conjunction with the plough, a sliding knife, for cutting the edges of books or boards. New, a small one will cost about £8 and a large one over £20, but an adequate one may be made for about £1. Beech is the best wood to use and it is as well to have it planed square at the woodyard. The screws I used were two of the bolts used for screwing up spring mattresses on old-fashioned beds. Clearance holes for the bolts are drilled through both pieces of wood and the nuts are let into the outside of one piece and secured with metal plates. The plough for a small lying press will cost about £3 and it is probably best to buy one although it is possible to make one.

Beech should also be used for cutting and backing boards which may be made with a saw and plane. Another important item which may easily be made from odd pieces of wood is a sewing frame. Those illustrated in textbooks usually have an adjustable bar, but a fixed bar is quite satisfactory. Pressing boards are made from 7- or 9-ply wood and it is often possible to buy off-cuts which may be cut to suitable sizes.

A number of small tools are required which you may already have but which may be bought quite cheaply. These are: a 12 in. steel rule, a knife, an oilstone, a large and a small pair of dividers, a fairly large pair of scissors, a carpenter's square, a backing hammer (a cobbler's hammer will do very well), and a knife for paring leather. Also required for paring is a lithographic stone but a piece of plate glass about 1 ft. square will do quite well. You will also require two or three bone folders which are used for many different jobs. One small and one large will be sufficient for most purposes and these must be bought at a book-binding suppliers. Two other tools which will have to be bought new are band-

nippers, used for moulding the leather round the raised bands when covering, which will cost about £1 10s., and an agate or bloodstone burnisher for edge-gilding, which will be about £2.

For finishing you will require some simple tools for decorating the leather or cloth covers and many of these may be made from odd pieces of brass rod or plate with a hacksaw and some small files. Unless you have access to a lathe you will have to buy a fillet (a brass wheel with a wooden handle used for running gold lines) which will cost about £1 10s., and you will also have to buy either handle letters or brass type. For the home binder handle letters are more flexible and as they are no dearer than type I recommend them. Unfortunately they are rather expensive and a set will cost about £8. You may be able to get a set secondhand but if you do, make sure the faces are not unduly worn or it will be no bargain. An alternative method of titling cloth-cased books is the paper label. Very neat labels may be made with smaller sizes of 'UNO' stencils, or they may be hand-written or typed. A finishing stove will be needed for heating the tools and letters and this will cost about £5, but a small electric hot-plate may be suitably modified without very much trouble. Other finishing tools are two polishing irons which may be made from steel with a hacksaw and files, and a gold knife and pad. The pad is made from a piece of wood with some padding material which is covered with a piece of leather flesh side out; an old kitchen knife, if it has a straight edge, will do quite well for a gold knife.

The main materials are paper, cloth, boards, leather and sewing cord, tape and thread and these are best bought from a bookbinding suppliers. Paper will cost from about 4d. a sheet for white to 1s. to 1s. 6d. for coloured or patterned. Cloth is from 3s to 5s. a yard and leather from 6s. to 10s a square foot. Adhesives are glue (ordinary carpenter's glue) and paste (cold water paste is suitable for most purposes). Boards (25x30 ins.) range from about 6d. for thin strawboard to about 4s. for thick millboard. Gold leaf is about 10s. a book of 25 sheets  $3\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$  ins. and gold leaf substitute, which may be obtained in either sheet or strip form, besides being cheaper, is much the easier to handle and is recommended for cloth work. The adhesive for gold leaf (not required with the gold substitute) is called 'glair' and is made either from white of egg, or crystal albumen which may be bought quite cheaply at a bookbinding suppliers and is rather more convenient to use. The cost of materials used in the binding of a demy octavo book ( $8\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$  ins.)  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ins. thick would be about 1s. in full cloth, 7s. 6d. in  $\frac{1}{4}$  leather and 14s. in full leather. This may seem very low, but is it the time taken which accounts for the high cost of commercial binding.

There are not many suppliers of bookbinding equipment and materials and most of them are in or near London. I have found N. J. Hill & Co. of Belmont Street, Chalk Farm, very obliging; although trade wholesalers they are quite willing to sell small quantities to amateurs. Russell Handicrafts of Hitchin and Dryad Handicrafts of 22 Bloomsbury Street, W.C.1 and Leicester, both of whom cater particularly for the amateur, and J. Hewit of 89 St. John Street, E.C.1, are also, I believe, very good.

In an article of this length it is not possible to deal with all aspects of the subject, nor to give fuller details of home-made equipment. I shall be pleased, however to give further details to anyone who is interested and hope that at least a few of the readers of this article will be persuaded to take up this fascinating hobby.

## COLLECTING FINE PRINTING by David Chambers

THE FIRST BOOKS in my schoolboy collection were all Nelson's Classics and it was with some reluctance that eventually I broke the neat row with Everyman's and World's Classics. I went on to collect English literature and books on art, bought a few press books by chance, and suddenly discovered that an interest in the physical qualities of my books, which had existed from the beginning, was becoming an over-riding enthusiasm. So I have come to collect books on printing and typography and allied subjects, and am trying to form a collection of general works on the subject, supplemented by more detailed works on such individual periods, printers, typefounders and designers as particularly interest me, together with representative examples of the books themselves.

I have rarely been able to afford to comply with the counsels of perfection of condition laid down by the writers of books about books – nor have I been able to collect books in fine bindings: in fact I have always wanted so many books that I have usually searched for poor copies rather than fine, so that I could have the more of them.

Among the large number of textbooks available, considerable selection seems desirable, for there are a comparatively small number of books which are essential, and fully worth their current market price, while there are a great many which would not be worth having at half of it. Because of this, I usually borrow any book of uncertain worth through the excellent public library service, before deciding which I will buy. I have not been able to find a good detailed history of printing and printers, but McKerrow's *Introduction to Bibliography*, Benn's *Periods of Typography* Series and Morison's *Four Centuries of Fine Printing* (in the miraculously remaindered 1949 edition, though I want the 1924 folio when I can find it), together give a fair general view, which I intend supplementing with specialized bibliographies as I can get them. Basic books for a study of type faces are of course Updike's *Printing Types*, and Johnson's *Type Designs* (though the only available edition of the latter is in itself a very poor piece of book production) – and for typefounding and printing practice, the Oxford U.P. edition of Moxon's *Mechanick Exercises* and Reed's *Old English Letter Foundries* edited by Johnson. On the other hand, such works as Ongania or Brown on Venetian printing, Peddie, McMurtrie or Oswald on the general history of printing, and a host of other picture books or brief histories make much good light reading, but are in my opinion, far too expensive, considering their limited usefulness, to be worth buying.

When collecting examples of printing, there are so many desirable things that condition has very often had to be sacrificed. Thus I have bought the Nonesuch *Apocrypha* (with a large hole in the spine) for a pound; the Golden Cockerel *Ecclesiastes* and *A Croppe of Kisses* (with damp stained bindings, but perfectly printed in black and colours) for a pound and two guineas respectively; the Kelmscott *Herrick* (out of series, bound in quarter linen, and with eight pages of text replaced by blank Kelmscott paper with a different watermark) for

C. Suetonij Tranquilli  
DVODECIM CAESARES,  
ex Erasmi recognitione.



PARISIIS.

Apud Simonem Colinaeum.

1543.

£2 10s.; and, I fear, a lot more similar, somewhat imperfect books. On the other hand, after a lucky buy of about fifteen of the Eragny Press books in fine condition for about half their usual price, I have been lured into trying to buy all thirty-two volumes, and now have only four of the more scarce to get. Printed almost perfectly, more varied than Kelmscott or Doves, and more delicate than Vale (which in other ways they resemble), I count these Eragny books among the most precious things in my collection. The Pear Tree Press plate-printed books are one of my more recent interests: I have as yet only a few, though they are, considering their beauty, considerably undervalued in some shops. I am trying to form a complete collection of Golden Cockerel prospectuses (and have been quite successful with those since 1934, though I find the earlier years more hard to come by), also of course, of Eragny (which are very difficult), and whatever turns up of other presses. At a shilling or two each, prospectuses seem a very cheap way of getting a representative collection of pages from press books which would otherwise be far too expensive to consider. Those which show the title, a specimen plate, a page of text and a description of the book are clearly the most interesting, but even the more sparse descriptions combined with order forms have some (not necessarily reliable) bibliographical value.

From private press books, and a study of the revivals of the historic types used in so many of them, I have been led back to the fine books produced in the earlier part of the sixteenth century on the Continent. Here my collecting is still in the early stage, where I will buy anything which looks well designed or printed and which is cheap. Somewhat to my surprise I have found that it is still fairly easy to get interesting specimens of this period for as little as a pound or twenty-five shillings. One must expect imperfect bindings, narrow margins and browned and wormed pages – but one may also expect fine engraved initials in profusion, fine type faces and some excellent printing. My own preference is for books which display the glorious italics which had so recently been invented. For instance, I have bought *Il libro del cortegiano del Conte Baldesar Castiglione* (Aldus 1533) set entirely in the tight Aldine italic, made the more cramped by the sixty or so tied letters in the fount, for £3 3s. (an early, and poor buy, for the title and colophon are in pen facsimile); *I fasti di Ovidio* (Marcolini 1551) showing the fine smaller italic of the calligraphic Vicentino school and also the larger italic, spoilt, as A. F. Johnson so rightly says, by ugly thick faced roman capitals, for a pound (much better value, this!); *Suetonii Duodecim Caesares* (Colines 1543) set in roman but with some italic, both Aldine and Vicentine in style, of which the title page is here reproduced, very slightly enlarged, for thirty shillings; and several books set in Granjon's later sixteenth century italics for a pound or two apiece, including a magnificent large folio – lacking the title – *G. Alghisi Da Carpi, Delle fortificationi* (Venice 1570), entirely set in a sumptuous 18 point.

I cannot, of course, afford to buy good incunabula, and don't think it worthwhile buying nondescript books at a minimum of £15 – just because they were printed before 1501 – so I am making instead a small collection of leaves taken from books printed in outstanding types by the master printers of the fifteenth century. I am always a little uneasy about this breaking up of books – though

presumably of imperfect copies: the hell I visualise for the bookseller who tears apart *perfect* copies involves similar pullings and quarterings, and I am not too sure of my own fate as an accessory. Anyway, I have fine double pages of type from Jenson (Venice 1478), showing his famous roman; Schweynheym and Pannartz (Rome 1471-2), in their second, more truly roman type; Rusch, the 'R' printer (Strassburg c.1470) in the type with the curious R which was formerly thought to be the first of all romans; Aldus (Venice 1497), in his much criticised greek type - which nevertheless still makes an imposing page; and others of less historical importance. These specimen pages cost me a guinea or less, a pair, apart from the Aldus, at two guineas: a comparatively inexpensive way of buying specimens of the finest fifteenth century printing, which would otherwise be quite beyond my purse.

Fortunately there is no similar dearth of specimens of fine printing of later centuries than the sixteenth, and these can often be picked up quite cheaply, in fine condition, once one is sure what one is after. So I have bought recently a beautiful Bodoni, printed in his early, warmer style, *Aminta: Favola Boschereccia* (1789), for ten shillings; several nice little Elzevirs at ten shillings apiece; an octavo Baskerville, *Terentii Commediae* (1772), also ten shillings; a pretty little Didot l'ainé, *Galatée* (1785), with delicate engravings by Flouest, for six shillings; a Foulis, *Filli di Sciro* (1772) for six shillings; and thirty nine volumes of Rees' *Cyclopaedia* (1820) - including the two 8 page type specimens by Fry & Steel and Alexander Wilson, four pages of plates showing the Stanhope Press and other iron presses, as well as a Common (wooden) Printing Press, and, best of all, four pages drawn and engraved by Blake to illustrate Sculpture - all for a penny a volume plus half a crown transport.

Pickerings printed at the Chiswick Press are still common enough at five to ten shillings, despite Keynes' bibliography - and the Sixties school of illustration is easier still in most general bookshops, at half a crown or so, rising perhaps to as much as five shillings if the wood engravings are printed in colours by Edmund Evans. And so one could go on, for worthwhile books of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries abound at reasonable prices and the real problem is once again one of selection.

There was a time when I felt a little ashamed not to have read all my books. Nowadays, I have no such qualms, and just admit that although I buy many books to read, I get as much pleasure from the many more which I buy simply as examples of fine printing or illustration.

## THE VINE "PARLIAMENT OF WOMEN" by Philip Ward

In his review, printed elsewhere in this issue, Thomas Rae mentions the new publication of the Vine Press, Hemingford Grey, Huntingdon. It is Sir Herbert Read's first full-length play, *The Parliament of Women*.

After two years' correspondence with Read, the present writer, engaged in compiling the full Read bibliography, suggested that the four plays should be published privately. These plays are *The Parliament of Women*, performed under Robert Speaight's direction at the French Institute in 1953, and three radio plays: *Thieves of Mercy*, *Aristotle's Mother*, and *Lord Byron at the Opera*, of which the first two had been published in Rayner Heppenstall's anthology, *Imaginary Conversations* (Secker and Warburg, 1948), long out of print.

Three months later, in June 1958, I suggested to John Peters, joint-proprietor of the Vine Press, that Read's plays might be printed by him, and that the "Collected Plays" should appear in an edition of 200 copies. In an introduction written shortly after, I wrote: "Set in the Morea, the play's theme develops into a conflict between allegiance to lord and country and the deep love of a woman. It must be acknowledged that the sustained dramatic power of *The Parliament of Women* is a new quality in Read's creative work, and that the taut handling of intricate sub-plots is evidence of a theatrical mastery hitherto dormant. His fertile imagination creates a web of argument and intrigue; his very inventiveness leads to a double conclusion, either of which is artistically satisfying, although in private correspondence he has written 'I myself think [the alternative last scene] is a better scene', though he adds, "it was not judged dramatically effective".

Herbert Read then sent a revised foreword to me, and I drew up an agreement for author and publisher to sign. John Peters suggested Bruce Rogers' Centaur for the type-face, and recommended that each play be preceded by an imaginative two-colour head-piece, with a similar motif on the title-page. May 1959 was the projected publication date in the previous August, the price to be five guineas. After consultation, John Peters subsequently decided on 100 copies at twelve guineas each. At this point I offered to publish each of the other plays separately, Peters having expressed a preference to print only *The Parliament of Women*.

In November 1958, Herbert Read wrote a new introduction suited to this play, replacing both my own introduction, and his revised foreword. By the following January, Reg Boulton, who had been approached to do the engravings, set up a specimen page and was in the process of engraving in full-page size in three colours for the verso preceding each act and the title double-spread. In April 1959, the author's new introduction was sent for setting.

The printing strike in October 1959 affected the work; at the same time I was inviting tenders for *Aristotle's Mother* from commercial printers. During the course of November, Peters sent the draft copy for the first prospectus, and the first galley proofs, in which the list of characters was combined with the list of actors taking part in the first reading. I corrected and returned the galleys.

Peters sent a photostat of the new title-page.

Here is John Peters' description of the illustrator's method: "Following long discussions he went straight to work, first of all on the background plate on which he painted his picture with an acid resist and then etched on the plate. The lino-cut for the second colour was then produced and so on to the wood-engraved block for the black. At this stage, we would proof the set and discuss colour in relation to the book as a whole. Boulton would take a day or two to re-touch his blocks and then we would print, often varying and changing colour up to the last minute. Consequently each block was produced directly in terms of the material concerned, rather than as a copying of set pieces. Only one block went wrong - that of the woman - and this he scrapped and cut again". Peters himself produced the title-page's lettered panel, reproduced by Dow-etched block.

In December 1959, Herbert Read sent me an alternative last scene for the third act, regretfully rejected for production reasons after consultation with Peters and myself. The idea was accepted of printing the list of actors as an insert sheet, also to form part of the final prospectus. By April 1960, the early prospectus was sent out to the trade and half the copies were printed off. Peters wrote: "Our system is to impose from the corrected galleys, proof the sheet (which is checked by our literary adviser), then revise and run on. In this way we have managed to produce one section of eight pages per week. In other words, we do not put the whole job into chase and then proof, but, as was customary with the early presses, we find it much more satisfactory to work off eight-page sections one at a time".

The mock-up of the final prospectus was ready in October 1960, and after being approved by editor and author, was despatched to the trade and to collectors. In November, the sheets were sent to be bound in quarter polished saffron morocco and drawn-on boards. The book was published on December 2 1960, and described in Bertram Rota's first 1961 catalogue as "one of the most handsome and ambitious private press productions we have seen for some time". *Aristotle's Mother* appeared in paper covers during the following January at 4/-.

This brief account of the production of *The Parliament of Women* may be of interest to the collector of fine books, to whom it will illustrate the rôle of the collector, not only after the appearance of a book, but also before, and during, its publication.

## SIMPLIFIED CATALOGUING RULES

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## A NOTE ON WATERMARKS

by H. R. Martin

Paper Consultant, Spicers Ltd.

NO ONE has satisfactorily fathomed the mysteries and complications of the ancient devices in watermarks.

Almost every scholar who has written on the subject has advanced a different theory of their origin, utility and meaning. Their symbolic aspect has been dealt with thoroughly, and numerous antiquarians have reproduced and indexed literally thousands of old watermarks from the thirteenth century onwards, but without a definite theory as to their original use.

It has been suggested that these devices may have been used solely as marks of identification for sizes of moulds and paper formed thereon, or as trade-marks of the paper makers who fashioned them.

It is not entirely out of the way to suggest that the old watermarks were perhaps nothing more than a mere fancy with the paper makers, who may have formed the designs or emblems to satisfy their own artistic natures. Another theory regarding the use of the early watermarks is that, since many of the workmen could not read, it was necessary to appeal to them by means of pictures.

At the present time watermarks are purely and simply trade-marks of the paper makers and they denote a recognised quality and standard of the mill's manufacture.

Dutch watermark papers were imported into England in fairly large quantities from Amsterdam during the seventeenth century and it is interesting to note that the British paper maker is still making use of the Dutch Lion in fool-scape paper.

The first British watermark is a combination of the work of John Tate and Caxton. John Tate built the first mill at Stevenage in Hertfordshire in about 1490 and Caxton translated the *Legende Aurie* of Jacobus de Voragine. A rare and perhaps unique combination consists of Caxton's printer's device and Tate's watermark on the same sheet.

Watermarks were first used in Italy in 1282 and the first time a head was used was about 1339, when a French watermark depicted the head of Christ.

### *Types of Watermarks and their First Dates of Introduction*

Arms of Amsterdam: 1635	Horn: 1600
Anglo Dutch Coat of Arms: 1697	Postillion: 1776
Elephant: 1663	Foolscap: 1610
Miscellaneous Mill Marks: 1740	Eagle: 1663
Arms of England: 1637	Pot: 1618
Britannia: 1750	Hats: 1771
London Coat of Arms: 1656	Initials: 1794
Royal Cypher and Bell: 1702	

## REVIEWS

*English Collectors of Books & Manuscripts (1530-1930) and Their Marks of Ownership* by SEYMOUR DE RICCI. The Holland Press, 112 Whitfield Street, London W.1, 42/-.

Having enriched my knowledge of the English private library to such an extent by a single reading of de Ricci's standard work, I am no longer surprised that a copy of the original edition could fetch £13 in 1959. The reprint is a graceful, ample production creditable to the small publishing firm whose address is given above. De Ricci's scholarly account ranges from Leland to the Irishman Panter, describing the libraries of the Earl of Bridgewater (now largely in the Henry H. Huntington Library, California), Robert Cotton (royally confiscated in 1629), Robert Harley, the third Earl of Sunderland, and many scores more. Several monographs have superseded de Ricci, but there is still no full account to replace him, especially where marks of ownership are concerned.

Similar reprints of the following three works may be of interest to *Private Library* readers, all from the same firm: "Bibliographical notes on histories of inventions and books of secrets", by John Ferguson, 2 vols., 15 gns. "An index to the early printed books in the British Museum: from the invention of printing to the year 1500, with notes on those in the Bodleian Library", by Robert Proctor (with the four supplements, and Burger's index), 18 gns. "Manuale tipografico", by Giambattista Bodoni (a facsimile), 2 vols., 18 gns.

*Phillipps Studies V. The Dispersal of the Phillipps Library* by ALAN NOEL LATIMER MUNBY. Cambridge U.P., 30/-.

Sir Thomas Phillipps has a complete chapter in de Ricci's work, but even that appears insignificant when compared with the five-volume work completed in 1960 by this account of the Bibliotheca Phillipica's gradual and fascinating dispersal. One would imagine, inevitably, an anti-climax on the disappearance from the centre of the stage of Phillipps himself. But Mr Munby is an enthusiast who has devoted his spare time to the subject for over twelve years, his researches are historically important, and his style pleasantly discursive. The seventy-page general index which concludes the work is to be followed at a later date by a finding-list.

*Humanistic Script of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* [introduced by A. J. FAIRBANK and R. W. HUNT]. "Bodleian picture book, no. 12". Bodleian Library, 2/6d.

Purchasers of Fairbank and Wolpe's "Renaissance handwriting: an anthology of italic scripts" (Faber and Faber, 1960, 63/-), will not need to be assured of the value of this booklet. With five text-pages and 24 monochrome plates, only four of which are reproduced in the larger volume, this introduction is excellent value for the non-specialist. There are examples of work by Ciriagio and Sinibaldi, Sallando and Palatino.

P.W.

## RECENT PRIVATE PRESS BOOKS

The Ark Press of Kim Taylor<sup>1</sup> had its beginning in 1954, and since that date has produced some notable limited editions. Now, in co-operation with Messrs Worden (Printers) Ltd of Marazion, Cornwall, a new series of books is being issued which owe their rarity more to their design than to their availability. Present plans allow for the appearance of about three books a year, and the first of these is Michael Adam's *A Matter of Death and Life*. The book is subtitled, 'an essay in autobiography' and reflects the author's concern about his present existence and his ultimate fate. Although the drawings of Ben Shahn will not be to everyone's taste, they reflect admirably the mood of the text both typographically and spiritually. The second book in the Ark series is *Glory on the Earth: the faith of a Naturalist*, by Donald Culross Peattie and comprises extracts from the author's *An Almanac for Moderns*, originally published by Allen & Unwin. Also written in a philosophical vein, this book is generously illustrated by strong and vital wood-engravings by Otto Rhoese. Both books are set in Bembo and are case-bound.

The inimitable – and indefatigable – Morris Cox has just produced another book of a delightfully individual nature. Entitled *War in a Cock's Egg*<sup>2</sup>, it is a poem in three parts, written by the printer, being 'the apotheosis of an Unknown Woman Victim of the War', when

Flares so pretty, green and red  
bestowed their kisses of betrayal.

The text is set in Rockwell italic and, as usual, Mr Cox has illustrated his verse with vivid illustrations which impart to the reader better than words the full horror of aerial bombardment.

Another illustrator of note is Ben Sands whose *The Dragon of Wantley*<sup>3</sup> was published at the end of last year. This little-known burlesque opera by Henry Carey was last published in 1827 and is founded on a traditional Yorkshire ballad of that name. But it is the linocuts which make this book so attractive. Sands is a master of his medium, and his vigorous illustrations are as much a part of the story as the text. A great deal of care has been taken in the setting of the type (S.B. Modern No. 20) and the presswork on handmade paper leaves nothing to be desired. The book is quarter bound in red cloth with home-marbled paper sides, and the edition is limited to 200 signed copies. In every way, excellent value for the money.

Readers of *Book Design and Production* will be familiar with John Ryder's project, the *Miniature Folio of Private Presses*<sup>4</sup>. 200 copies of this co-operative effort contain sections, each of which consists of four pages (some French-folded) measuring 6½ x 4½ and printed at the presses concerned. They are gathered loosely into a case which is printed with a reproduction of an early engraving of a printing shop and comprise contributions from 28 private presses in

1. Ark Press, Marazion, Cornwall (distributed by the Scorpion Press, 11 Rofant Road, Northwood, Middlesex.) (15s. each.)
2. Gogmagog Press, 3 Heyworth Road, London, E.15 (Unpriced).
3. Shoestring Press, 97 Island Wall, Whitstable, Kent (direct subscribers, 21s.; via book-sellers, 30s.).
4. Miniature Press, 4 Cambrian Road, Richmond, Surrey (not for sale).

England, Scotland, Europe, and the United States. Although certain technical details of the press were required to be included in the text, press owners were left free to design their contribution as they pleased. The resultant folio is a collection of material whose standards vary considerably in conception and execution. A detailed assessment of the contributions to the Miniature Folio has appeared in *Book Design and Production*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1960).

David Chambers, the assistant secretary of the Association and active organiser of its Society of Private Printers, produced in 1960 a little folder entitled *Some Decorative Japanese Papers*<sup>5</sup>. Small samples of various varieties of these unusual papers were mounted on the folder and printed with the name, size, and price per sheet. The folder also contains a note on their manufacture. Early this year an enlarged second edition was produced, this time sewn in booklet form, which allowed the use of a larger size of paper and consequently showed the sheets to better advantage. Mr Chambers is to be congratulated for introducing these Japanese papers (already much in use in the U.S.A.) to the attention of British private press owners.

Peter Isaac of Wylam, Northumberland, came to printing via bibliography, and it is not surprising that he should have turned his attention to the activities of one of the great printers of the late 18th century, William Bulmer of Newcastle upon Tyne. The results of some of his researches are contained in the first issue of *Bulmer Papers*<sup>6</sup>, hand set (in Monotype Bulmer, of course) and printed by Mr Isaac at his Allenholme Press. The principal article in this number is Robert Pollard's 'A Biographical Sketch of Three Newcastle Apprentices' (Bulmer, Bewick and Pollard). In the Editorial, the editor-printer tells us that the *Papers* will appear at irregular intervals 'as material offers, and as time for hand-printing allows'.

An early 19th century figure in the book trade is featured in a well produced little book from the Laverock Press of Iain Bain. This is *John Sharpe, Publisher and Bookseller, Piccadilly*<sup>7</sup>, and is subtitled 'a preliminary survey of his activities in the London Book Trade 1800-1840'. Mr Bain maintains that Sharpe's quality of production singles him out from the general run of his contemporaries. From the beginning he employed Charles Whittingham, the elder, as his printer. Apart from his concern for the fine presentation of his books, Sharpe took considerable pains to ensure that their textual accuracy was of the highest standard. This brief account of Sharpe's activities has been produced primarily as a sounding for a more extensive work and in the hope that it will perhaps lead to the discovery of further sources of information. Set throughout in Bembo, with two halftone illustrations, the edition is limited to 40 paper-bound copies. Readers who are interested or feel they could assist him in the preparation of a subsequent book are invited to write to Mr Bain.

Raymond Lister of the Golden Head Press has produced another book by a process akin to that of William Blake. It is *The Song of Fionnuala and Nine Other Songs*<sup>8</sup>, by Thomas Moore. The edition, which is limited to 26 copies, is

5. Cuckoo Hill Press, 41 Cuckoo Hill Road, Pinner, Middlesex (not for sale).

6. Allenholme Press, Wylam, Northumberland (20s.).

7. Laverock Press, Flat 1, Brocket Hall, Welwyn, Hertfordshire (gratis).

8. Golden Head Press, 26 Abbey Road, Cambridge (4 gns; 15s.).

printed in monochrome from line blocks taken from the artist's original designs and each of the eleven pages is elaborately coloured and illuminated by hand. Handmade paper is used throughout and the book is cloth-bound by Gray of Cambridge. A few additional uncoloured, unnumbered copies are available in sewed wrappers.

A press which may not altogether be considered 'private', but has consistently produced excellent work in the tradition of the private press is the St Albert's Press of the English Carmelite Fathers. Two recent issues to come from this press are *Quatrains and Other Poems*<sup>9</sup>, by The Lady Margaret Sackville, and *Arthur Machen: a Miscellany*<sup>10</sup>. Both are sewn in wrappers and utilise Perpetua type; the book of poems benefits from better design and has the advantage of being decorated with delightful drawings by Margaret Wilcocksen. The author has made the quatrain her especial province and has brought it to perfection, each a true, if miniature, poem. The *Arthur Machen Miscellany* contains memories and impressions of the author by Adrian Goldstone, C.A. and Anthony Lcjeune, Father Brocard Sewell, Maurice Spurway, Wesley D. Sweetser, and Henry Williamson.

Recent private press books have been dominated by two books from English presses which stand head and shoulders above the others. *The Parliament of Women*, by Sir Herbert Read<sup>11</sup>, published from the Vine Press, is a truly superb example of fine design and presswork which is much enhanced by the full-page illustrations of Reg Boulton. (Fuller details of the book's production appear elsewhere in this journal.)

But the Vine Press book is rivalled (if not surpassed) by Stanbrook Abbey Press's latest publication *The Path to Peace*<sup>12</sup>. This collection of poems by Siegfried Sassoon (some hitherto unpublished), covers half a century of the poet's life from 1909 to 1960. Although they are not here printed in chronological order they do observe a sequence which traces his spiritual pilgrimage from the somewhat dreamy pantheism of youth through long years of lonely seeking to 'life breathed afresh' in acceptance of the gift of faith. The poems are beautifully printed on handmade paper in van Krimpen's Cancellaresca Bastarda type, with twenty-eight initial letters in burnished gold and colour by Margaret Adams and Wendy Westover. 480 copies are bound in quarter vellum with Parisian paper sides by George Percival and Rigby Graham (20 copies bound in full vellum were fully subscribed before publication). This is the most beautiful book by far produced by the Benedictines of Stanbrook, and a more perfect combination of the skills of the printer and calligrapher is difficult to imagine.

John Ryder is the author of the article entitled "The contemporary private press" in Glaister's "The Glossary of the book" published by Allen & Unwin in 1960 at 6 guineas. A limited number of off-prints of this four-page illustrated article is available to the members of the Private Libraries Association. Members wishing to obtain a copy should write to the Publications Secretary, 41 Cuckoo Hill Road, Pinner, Middlesex.

9. St Albert's Press, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, South Wales (12s.).

10. Ibid. (10s. 6d.).

11. Vine Press, Hemingford Grey, Huntingdon (12 gns.).

12. Stanbrook Abbey Press, Callow End, Worcester (5 gns.).

## Letter to the Editor

Sir,

In 1861, Sir J. W. Kaye edited the journals of Miss Ellis Cornelia Knight, the MSS. of which I have not been able to trace since they were in this editor's possession. I would be grateful for any information your members may be able to provide on their later history or present whereabouts. As he was an authority on India military history, it is possible Sir J. W. Kaye had a library on this subject, and that after his death in 1876 these MSS. were sold with it.

Yours, &c.,

(DR) C. A. LUTTRELL

Senior Common Room, The University, Leicester.

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