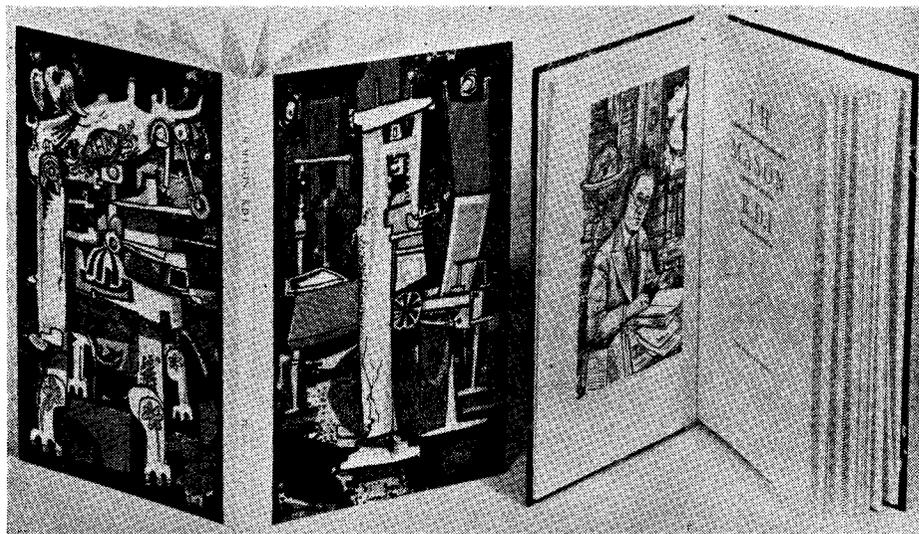


THE TWELVE BY EIGHT  
PRIVATE PRESS

announces publication of

*Leaves from the Notebook of  
J. H. Mason R.D.I. Scholar Printer*



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# The Private Library

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THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE  
PRIVATE LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION

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Vol. 4 : No. 3

July 1962

## The Private Libraries Association

65 Hillway, London N.6

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

Hon. Secretary: Antony Wilson

### Other Council Members:

D. J. Chambers	Peter Reid
G. E. Hamilton	C. E. Sheppard
J. K. Power	Philip Ward

The Private Libraries Association is a society of people interested in books from the amateur or professional point of view. Membership is open to all who pay one guinea on January 1st each year regardless of the date of enrolment.

Founded in 1956, the Association immediately organised the Exchange Scheme as a means of co-operation among collectors and students: *The Exchange List* is still published six times a year.

*The Private Library*, begun in January 1957, has printed contributions from members and experts outside the society on a variety of subjects concerned with the world of books and the organisation of libraries at home.

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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. 4 No. 3 July 1962

## Association Affairs

### Annual General Meeting and Annual Lecture

Mr Howard M. Nixon of the British Museum gave the Sixth Annual Lecture of the Private Libraries Association on May 1st. His lecture, illustrated by coloured slides, was devoted to the development of some bookbinding styles, and the keen interest in this theme shown by members, and by the unusually large number of guests, was reflected in the subsequent discussion. The Council of the Association is grateful not only to the speaker, but also to the administrative staff of the Library Association, whose co-operation was highly valued.

In the course of the Annual General Meeting, all the officers and members of Council were re-elected by a unanimous vote.

### Forthcoming Publications

For the benefit of Association members who were not able to attend the Sixth Annual Lecture, the Council propose to print it, with illustrations, for free distribution in the autumn. At that time, too, *Calligraphic booklabels* should be ready for distribution free of charge.

*Private Press Books 1961* is now published, covering not only the world's private press output during last year, but also omissions from previous issues. Larger than hitherto, and illustrated for the first time, our annual bibliography still costs only 7/6d (10/6d to non-members).

# NOTES ON THE PRINTING METHODS OF THE GOLDEN COCKEREL PRESS

by A. C. Cooper

THE GOLDEN COCKEREL PRESS was started in 1920 by the late Harold Midgely Taylor in a large wooden hut partitioned into composing-room, press-room, office and packing-room. It was lined inside and well-heated, and situated at the rear of his house, The Elms Cottage, Milly Bridge Road, Waltham St. Lawrence. As there was no electric light laid on in Waltham in those days, the lighting for the evenings in the winter was hanging paraffin oil lamps, and the heating system was by two anthracite closed stoves, one in the press-room and one in the composing-room, with a Valor oil stove in the packing-room when it was used. Later Mr Gibbings had central heating installed with radiators in each room, and also Aladdin incandescent-mantle oil lamps for better efficiency.

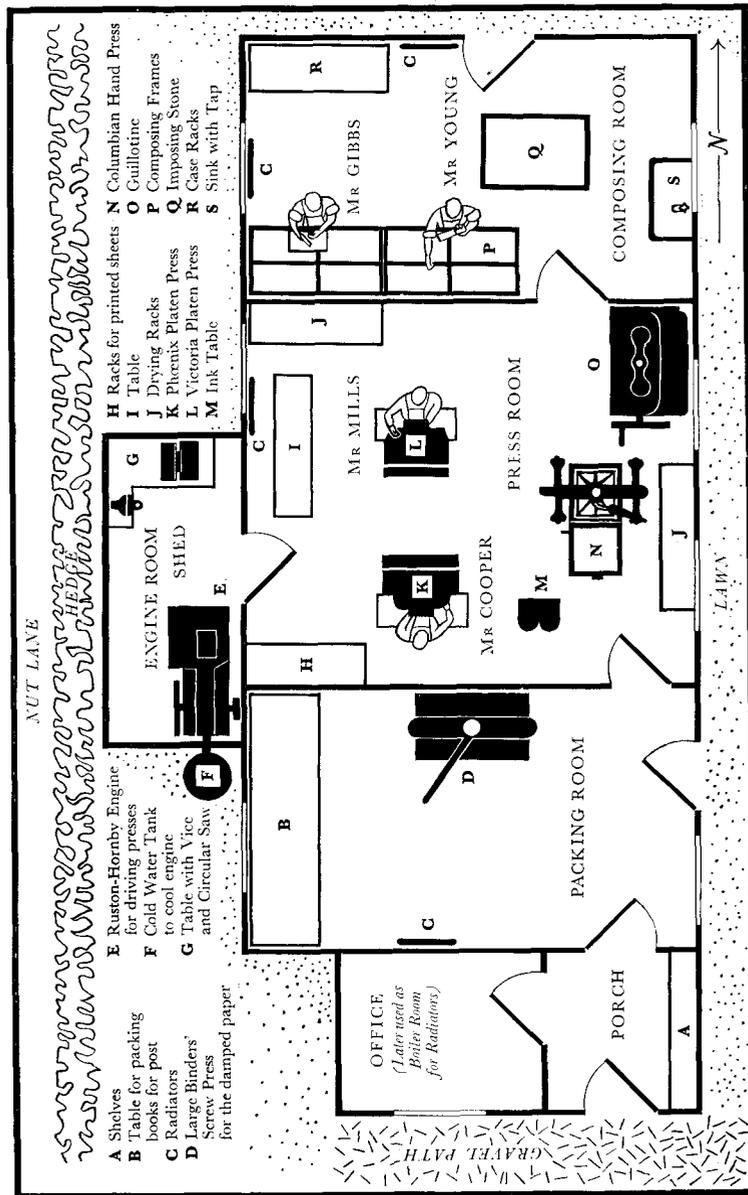
Mr Taylor's idea was to get together young authors who he thought would all work as a team to set up the type for their own books, do the printing and the binding and so minimize the costs. He succeeded in the beginning - they were all enthusiastic at first; but as hard work became apparent they left him one by one, and he and his wife were left holding the baby so to speak. But not being daunted, he engaged tradesmen: myself as pressman and two compositors, Mr Frank Young and Mr Harry Gibbs.

In Mr Taylor's time the books were printed dry on ordinary printing stock or antique paper. The machine was a Double Crown size Wharfedale cylinder with flat-bed, which was power-driven by an oil-engine (Ruston-Hornby) in a shed attached to the hut. There was a bookbinding stitching machine, as they bound the books too. Later Mr Taylor bought a Victoria heavy platen press from a London printing-machine company. This was also power-driven, and it took a sheet about 20" x 15". The bookbinding stitching machine was disposed of to this firm at the same time. With the acquisition of the Victoria platen we started to print the classics in the old-fashioned way by damping hand-made paper and using Caslon Old Style Roman face type. The first book I remember being printed like this was *Hydriotaphia* by Sir Thomas Browne.

After a time Mr Taylor's health broke down (he had tuberculosis) and in 1924 he disposed of the Press to Mr Robert Gibbings, who carried on the hand-made damped paper tradition with an occasional printed edition on dry antique paper. Later Mr Gibbings disposed of the Wharfedale flat-bed printing machine and in its place bought a heavy Phoenix platen press of German make. This machine was slightly larger than the one we already had. There was also a Columbian hand press on which the compositors pulled their proofs for author's corrections; this was about 21" x 16", and was used a great deal by Mr Gibbings for proofing his wood engravings. Another pressman, Mr Reuben Mills, was employed for a while to work the Victoria press; also another compositor,



A. C. Cooper at the Golden Cockerel Press



Mr Chivers from Wokingham; these two men were employed temporarily during a more prosperous time.

The mode of procedure with the hand-made paper (this was Batchelor, Van Gelder, Unbleached Arnold, or Kelmscott) was as follows. The reams of paper were ordered from the mills double the size that the platen press would take, and cut in half by the guillotine so as to get one straight edge to feed up to the gauges in the printing press for good register of the printing of the other side of the sheet. The remaining deckle edges of the paper were preserved to be bound up in the completed book.

The number of sheets required for the edition with the necessary overs in case of spoils were counted out and these were taken in batches, usually of five sheets, and immersed in a bath of clean water and laid on specially-made 1"-thick boards a little larger than the sheets of paper. Then four dry sheets were placed over these, then another batch of five put through the bath, and then again four dry sheets over them, and so on till the whole pile was done, finishing up with a dampened sheet; then another thick wooden board was placed on top of the dampened pile. This was done in the late afternoon so that the moisture would have time through the night to permeate the whole pile of paper with equal dampness. The pile was put in a very large, strong press (similar to a copying press) and a little pressure was put on the damp paper. In the morning it was taken out and gone through by hand to straighten out any wrinkles caused by the expansion of the damp paper, which should be uniformly damp all through. It was then put back in the press for an hour or more, and the press screwed down very tight to make the sheets flat and ready for printing.

On the platen machine the inking was automatic from a trough of ink at the top of the machine. Small piles were printed at a time to avoid any set-off on the reverse side, damp sheets of antique paper being placed at top and bottom of each little pile to prevent their drying out until the other side of the sheet could be printed. When it came to printing the other side of the sheet, it was necessary to interleave with a thin sheet of ordinary paper placed underneath the hand-made sheet to stop any set-off from the first printing. The pages were usually printed four up in a forme; if the pages were folio size, we printed two up. After a day the interleaves were taken out and the completed printed sheets were hung up in small lots on lines to dry the damp out of the paper and dry the ink. When the whole edition was completed, the sheets were packed flat in a strong box and sent by a local carrier to a high-class binder in London: Sangorski and Sutcliffe.

Great care was taken by the compositors in correcting the proofs, and Mr Gibbings personally passed each forme after it was made ready for printing, and when the run was once started no corrections were ever made in any of our editions. Certainly no page was ever cancelled or replaced at this stage, so there could be no variants in any edition of our books. The only disaster I ever remember was to one book we had completed. The sheets were packed flat in the special strong box made for them, to go in the first place to the binders in London by rail. This particular box was left by the railway staff out in the rain, when half of the contents were damaged by stain, so that only half the

advertised edition came out. The claim against the railway company ended with only poor compensation for the loss, so Mr Gibbings never sent any more printed sheets by rail; instead the local carrier, Mr Spackman, was chartered on all future occasions.

Mr Gibbings also got the late Eric Gill to design a special type for the Press, known as the Golden Cockerel face. This was first used in 1931, and was used extensively in later editions. I may say we had many noted artists and authors visiting us from time to time.

And in concluding I would like to say a word of appreciation: Mr Gibbings treated his employees most kindly and generously, and we were all most happy during the nine years that he conducted the Golden Cockerel Press. It was a sad day for us when we had to close down owing to the great depression of that time. I myself was always interested in art, and I did some woodcuts for him.

Robert Gibbings himself wrote on the printing methods of the Press in *The Woodcut*, 1927, *The Studio*, February 1929, and *The Colophon*, September 1931.

## THE GERNSHEIM COLLECTION

by Helmut and Alison Gernsheim

THE GERNSHEIM COLLECTION, which was started in January 1945, is devoted to the history of photography and is the largest collection of its kind in the world. It consists of about 35,000 original photographs, about 3,600 books and journals, 250 autograph letters and manuscripts and about the same number of apparatus, lenses and accessories, and innumerable photo-historical "documents", such as medals, advertisements and so on.

### Books

The scope of the library extends from the earliest published description of the *camera obscura* in the Como edition of Vitruvius' *De architectura libri dece* (1521) to picture-books by great photographers of the present day. It includes all the important books of the 16th-18th centuries dealing with the evolution of the *camera obscura* and photo-chemical researches, for it is the combination of these two branches of science that led Thomas Wedgwood to the first photographic experiments about 1800.

Among the many rare "firsts" in photography are Fox Talbot's privately published *Some account of the art of photogenic drawing* (February 1839) and no fewer than twelve separate publications on the daguerreotype process in various languages.

Until the introduction of the half-tone block about 1880 a limited number of books – usually expensive editions – were illustrated with original photographs stuck in by hand. In addition to the first two books of this kind – Fox Talbot's *The pencil of nature* (1844) and *Sun pictures in Scotland* (1845) – the Gernsheim Collection possesses 345 books of this type, out of the total of about 450 published in Britain between 1844 and 1875.

Another section of the library is devoted to publications on cinematography, and its forerunner, the magic lantern, going back to the first published account in Kircher's *Ars magna lucis et umbrae* (1671).

Amongst the MSS. and autograph letters, pride of place goes to Nicéphore Niépce's *Notice sur l'héliographie* submitted to the Royal Society in 1827: it is the first account of the invention of photography.

### Photographs

Starting with the world's first photograph by Nicéphore Niépce (1826), the collection is rich in photographic incunabula by the inventors of photography on metal and on paper – L. J. M. Daguerre and W. H. Fox Talbot – and other early examples of the various photographic processes introduced during the 19th century. The main emphasis is, however, on photographs as *pictures*, showing photography as a means of artistic expression from its introduction right up to the present day. All great photographers from David Octavius Hill to Henri Cartier-Bresson are represented by carefully-selected examples.

In addition to artistic photographs, the collection includes illustrations of wars and other historic events, social documentation, and about 3,500 portraits of famous people.

### Apparatus

The aim has been to collect some typical pieces of apparatus and accessory equipment for each period, beginning with the *camera obscura* and *camera lucida* used by artists as an aid in drawing.

### Index

The books, journals, and important articles are card-indexed under author's name. There is some sub-classification for major sub-divisions such as colour photography, cinematography, exhibition catalogues, etc., and it is only limitations of space and lack of staff that prevent the introduction of a complete cross-reference system. Photographically-illustrated books are naturally indexed under the name of the photographer since in this specialized collection the photographer is of greater importance than the author. Ideally there should be an author's cross-reference.

A description, with measurements, date, and so on, of every other item in the collection is entered on typewritten sheets. These are classified according to subject, e.g. autograph letters, cameras, medals, etc. Photographs are subdivided according to the processes by which they were taken, and arranged under the names of the photographers in alphabetical order. Anonymous photographs are classified in date order.

There is a special index for historic events in date order. Celebrities are entered under their names as well as the name of the photographer. They are further classified in a cross-reference system according to their field of activity.

### Housing of the Collection

Whilst the index system makes it possible to find out immediately whether or not an item is represented in the collection, it is impossible to have a systematic

storage arrangement in a flat. About two-thirds of the books and journals are packed away in boxes and stored. Those frequently needed for reference are on bookshelves lining the walls.

Photographs present a still greater storage problem owing to their greatly varying sizes. The same photographer may be represented in albums, small photographs, and big exhibition prints. The latter are kept in portfolios in cupboards. A rough list of contents is written on each portfolio. Small photographs, and photographs illustrating special themes, such as transport, seaside, or royalty, are kept in folders. These folders are placed in every available drawer and cupboard, and memory has to serve us for their whereabouts.

Although the importance and quantity of the collection have long outgrown the limitations of space which greatly restrict its practical use, during the past seventeen years several thousand negatives have been made of the most interesting photographs. Modern prints of these, kept in cardboard boxes and classified in a similar way to the originals, make it possible to draw upon these illustrations for books, magazines, and television.

It is obvious that in a collection that has already outgrown its storage space, new acquisitions must be limited to absolutely essential items. Leading contemporary photographers are only too willing to give us prints in order to be represented in our collection, and we are sorry that we cannot avail ourselves of their generosity except to a very small extent. Rarities of the past have practically disappeared from the market, and thus the rate of acquisition has slowed down during the last few years. We do not keep a record of the yearly intake, for two people alone have already more than enough to do looking after the collection, and the constant historical research it entails – in addition to earning a living as authors. But the last count made from the indexes and quoted at the beginning of this article forms an interesting comparison with the figures published in *The Times* in March 1952. They show that in 1962 the Gernsheim Collection has grown to approximately three times its size ten years ago.

## ON INDEXING A FAVOURITE NOVELIST

by Robert Collison

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I spent by chance a whole year in California: the books I took with me were few, but they included my set of Surtees. While I was in America I remembered the problems which Surtees sets for his readers and, being on my own, resolved to do something about it. The result was a dictionary of all the hunting novels – that is, those that are concerned with Jorrocks. To this day it remains unpublished, for no publisher is willing to undertake the issue of a volume which would naturally sell but few copies. Nevertheless, I do not regret the exercise, for that is what it was. I know that some authors speak of their creations as a labour of love; it is doubtful whether any indexer would care to apply this description to his work. Indexing is largely drudgery without any spectacular reward, and certainly lacking any

possibility of being filmed or translated into numerous languages. It is, however, a task that has its own peculiar advantages and which is worth taking on at least once in a lifetime. In the case of Surtees' novels, for instance, there has been the unexpected delight on discovering that Mrs Jorrocks's Christian name was Julia, and Mrs Bowker's Cleopatra; of finding and piecing together the many different clues to Jorrocks's early life, and of discovering an earlier and immature Charley Stobbs in "the Yorkshireman". This is just routine indexing and detection. But there is also the reward of being obliged to study the construction of Surtees' books in detail, and of becoming acquainted with the author's methods of writing and with his failures and successes in his craft. The indexer, as no-one else, sees the author at his desk and waits with eagerness to see whether he will take this opportunity or avoid that trap. Often there is the temptation to cry out "what a chance to develop the plot was missed here", and often there is a regret that some insignificant character was left unexploited and futureless. Even the literary critic does not achieve the remorseless degree of criticism to which the indexer is impelled by the very nature of his work.

In the indexing of Surtees it soon becomes obvious that he wrote at great speed and without taking any careful note of his characters as he invented them. It seems doubtful whether he ever went back and read over more than the preceding few chapters, for had he done so he could hardly have allowed so much promising material to remain in outline form only. Surtees had a great gift for sketching an interesting character – but, unfortunately, too often abandoned it in its first form. It is impossible to avoid the impression that Surtees was like many an artist who starts many pictures but shirks the labour of completing them: how otherwise could he have left us with so little knowledge of Fleeceall, of the Brantinghames or of Sir Archy Depecarde?

The truth is that Surtees was more interested in animals than in human beings. Hounds and horses he sees with complete clarity; there are no duplications of name, no hesitation in depicting them. We never find a horse's name spelt sometimes with an "s" and sometimes without, as in the case of Mr Castors. "Priestess" is clearer in our minds than James Blake, and we can see the country around Handley Cross more clearly than the spa itself. From which we can only assume that Surtees was essentially a lonely man, happier in wandering on horseback alone along the road or across country than in talking to his neighbours.

As my indexing proceeded, it became obvious that there were some characters in which Surtees was intensely interested: it is to his credit that Bowker, the seediest of good fellows, should be one of these. And then there is the immortal James Pigg who is described with the utmost care, so that his existence in real life under some other name is certain. Jovey Jessop and Marmaduke Muleygrubs, Sir Moses Mainchance and Mr Jawleyford, are as prominent in our minds as are Facey Romford and Soapey Sponge. We are therefore in possession of another factor: it was not necessary for Surtees to admire a character in order to give him sufficient attention; it was simply that he had no patience with the duller persons in his tales.

Readers may feel that Surtees has been taken too much *au sérieux*, in the same way that Danish scholars have compiled a learned bibliography of the

writings of Sherlock Holmes on such subjects as cigar ash. Like many another writer, Surtees often played for time, filling in an extra paragraph here and there with names and situations which he never visualised properly or intended to develop. Nevertheless, the trained writer never completely betrays his craft, and it frequently happens that in these obvious fill-ups, Surtees gives just the little extra detail that identifies a minor character or anchors an allusion. The tedious sporting "lectors" of Jorrocks are full of clues of this kind, and there are many similar instances which would however only be of interest to another indexer undertaking the same task. It is always a pleasant surprise, however, to find that Surtees' allusions are usually to real people, and to know that Geoffrey Gambado and Frank Grant really existed.

Surtees' pages are full of contemporary allusions – no doubt in part due to the fact that he wrote for serial publication – but their identification is not made easier by such people as Jorrocks concealing Madame Vestris under "Westris" and Osbaldeston under "Hosbaldeston". The name of the latter reminds us that any serious reader of Surtees who has not already done so, will find both pleasure and profit in reading Squire Osbaldeston's *Autobiography*, Nimrod's *Life of John Mytton*, and Surtees' own *Sporting and social recollections*. Like indexing, this serious reading round an author occasionally has the effect of removing the first bloom when one realises that such-and-such a chapter was inserted later, or that this character is a satire on Apperley, and that one a hit at a new fashion. It is like visiting a chocolate factory and hearing the technical difficulties of inserting the glacé cherry in its casing. But once the first shock of seeing the inner workings is over, a new and deeper interest develops which leads to a far readier appreciation of an author's work.

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## J. H. MASON AT THE DOVES PRESS: a Note

by John Mason

THE REVIVAL of interest in the book as a form of craftsmanship began with Charles Ricketts at the Vale Press and with William Morris at the Kelmscott Press. At the time that these presses were doing great pioneer work in the cause of printing, Cobden-Sanderson had set up a hand bindery in Maiden Lane. He had learned his craft at Roger de Coverly's workshop in St. Martin's Lane and now was to make himself famous for hand bindings, free from all commercial defects and shams, and carefully tooled with lively, imaginative designs. He taught his wife sewing and headbanding and, at first, they did all the work themselves. Laurie de Coverly once told me that the finest bindings they produced at this time were two for Mrs William Morris and, through this contact, the Sandersons came to know the work of the Kelmscott Press. Later, Sanderson removed his bindery to a house by the river on the Upper Mall, Hammersmith and so became a near neighbour and friend of Morris.

Mrs Sanderson had a great idea of setting up a press also, so that her husband would have good, well-printed books to bind. But this project had to wait awhile. In 1900, however, Emery Walker and Cobden-Sanderson decided to found the Doves Press which was to have so far-reaching an effect upon book printing throughout the western world.

*I went down to see Cobden-Sanderson in May 1900 writes my father, and as I made my way down to the Doves Bindery on the Upper Mall, Hammersmith, I was enchanted with the old-fashioned loveliness of the river thereabouts, and with the elm trees planted by Queen Caroline, as Cobden-Sanderson later told me. The Doves Bindery garden, which was then full of blue irises, ran down to the river, with glimpses of reaches to Hammersmith Bridge, and up-river past Chiswick Eyot, and across to the hills of Putney Heath.*

*Next day I started to work by laying the Doves type, and then I began to set the first book.*

Although this is more than sixty years ago, interest in that famous Doves Press is greater now than ever. So I have had selections from my father's notebook printed privately in an edition of 300 copies and, to save expense, I have bound them up myself. If the edition sells, then I shall have to consider producing a larger book, from the material which I have. Few now are left who themselves took part in this exciting period in book production. I am no longer young—I must try to make the time.

*Leaves from a scholar printer's notebook*, by J. H. Mason, is a publication of the Twelve by Eight Private Press, 2 Ratcliffe Road, Leicester. The price is 15s.

## JANE AUSTEN'S ARIOSTO

by A. N. L. Munby

IN 1946 I began to catalogue the great collection of books bequeathed to the College by John Maynard Keynes, 1st Baron Keynes of Tilton. I first segregated and dealt with his important author-collections of philosophical and scientific writers, such as Newton, Hobbes, Locke, Hume and Descartes, and I then proceeded to describe his smaller holding of English literature before 1700, especially his series of Jacobean and Restoration plays. I left until last what I regarded as the most humdrum part of the library, the eighteenth-century sets of standard authors, Swift, Johnson, Burke, &c.; and to this section I consigned a five-volume edition of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, 1783, in the English translation of John Hoole, an addition to our library which, I must confess, I regarded without any great enthusiasm, and which I assumed, quite wrongly, to have been a relatively indiscriminating purchase of Keynes's undergraduate days.

My delight therefore may be imagined when, upon examining the book properly, I observed the following inscriptions on the fly-leaves of the first volume:—

Jane Austen: Maynard Keynes from Virginia Woolf, Christmas 1936.

Some bookcollectors of middle age still recall the excitement they experienced when a small cache of Jane Austen's books (a provenance of great rarity) turned up at a south-coast sale and were offered in 1933 in the catalogue of a bookseller at St. Leonard's-on-Sea. I asked Sir Geoffrey Keynes for his recollections on the subject and he has kindly told me that he himself secured Jane Austen's set of Goldsmith's *Animated Nature*, 8 vols., 1774 and Dr R. W. Chapman her set of Hume's *History*, 6 vols., 1759; and, according to his notes, Virginia Woolf, apart from the work under description, received Thomson's *Works*, 4 vols., 1773. On his reactions to receiving the catalogue Sir Geoffrey comments:—"I didn't really believe it, and wasn't surprised when nothing happened in response to my order. And then after a fortnight came the parcel."

The inscriptions which link the names of two of our foremost British authoresses also commemorate a lifelong friendship. Maynard Keynes' intimacy with the talented children of Leslie Stephen and his share with them in promoting the climate of opinion to which the label of "Bloomsbury" is now attached are set out fully in Sir Roy Harrod's *Life of John Maynard Keynes*, 1951, and certainly lie outside the purpose of this brief record. "Association item" is a term stretched by cataloguers to cover many volumes of minimal interest, but the three names recorded in this Ariosto make it, for me, a particularly attractive and evocative relic, and doubly precious to a College fortunate enough to possess already the manuscript of Jane Austen's *Sanditon*.

## THE SOCIETY OF PRIVATE PRINTERS by David Chambers

THE SOCIETY is an informal group of printers working under the aegis of the Private Libraries Association to encourage co-operation between press-owners through an exchange of ideas and printed specimens. There are now some thirty printer-members who have undertaken to produce, within the next two or three years, a pamphlet on some bibliographical or typographical subject for distribution to the others. Members who are not printers may sometimes be able to buy these pamphlets: the proceeds going either to the printer or to a special S.P.P. publications fund. Whenever possible any other material which might be of interest (such as prospectuses or off-prints) is collected and distributed to press-owners and collectors. A good deal of correspondence and visiting has taken place between members, information on processes exchanged, and even arrangements made for the disposal of unwanted equipment.

The booklets which have been produced so far are: *Some Decorative Japanese Papers* (displayed in a zig-zag, with a note on Japanese paper making) from the Cuckoo Hill Press; *Seven Days and Twelve Thousand Million Years of Creation* (Chapter 1 of Genesis, rearranged and printed in a vigorous black-letter) from Roy Lewis and daughters at the Keepsake Press; *Establishing a Library* (an elegant printing of a translation from Gabriel Peignot's *Le Manuel du Bibliophile*) from F. E. Pardoe; *Letters to Scotland* (specimen engravings and title-page from the book, with a note on its printing) from Mary Quick at the Juniper Press; *Some Notes on Wood Engraving* (selected from Bewick's *Memoir*, with eleven engravings, including six printed from the original blocks) from Tom Rae at the Signet Press; and *Collecting Press Books* (an article by Will Ransom, reprinted for the Typophiles and for private distribution) from Leonard Bahr at the Adagio Press.

There are a number of other pamphlets planned or at press. These include John Bell's *Albium de Novo Castro* from Iain Bain at the Laverock Press; *Calypso* from Roderick Cave at the Officina Speluca (displaying the flowers he designed himself, and had cast privately in co-operation with two or three other members of the S.P.P.); a note on Francis Niblett, architect, and George Rogers, glass-stainer and painter, from John Craig at the Piccolo Press; *Puffing Billy and its creator* from Peter Isaac at the Allenholme Press; and notes on a new kind of book-plate from Ben Lieberman at the Herity Press.

When most of the members of the society have produced their pamphlets, other forms of typographical co-operation are contemplated. Projects might include *Press Cards* (elaborate visiting cards designed to form a card index of members) and perhaps the production of *Folios* devoted to a common theme (on the lines of John Ryder's *Miniature Folio*), each press printing a French-fold of a standard size. Books comprising signatures from different printers would seem inevitably to lack cohesion, but very close co-operation between a few presses might be successful even in this.

Members of the P.L.A. who would like to be associated with the society,

either as printers or collectors, should contact me at 41 Cuckoo Hill Road, Pinner, Middlesex.

*Printer-members*

*Members 16, 97, 194, 222, 223, 227, 243, 248, 255, 259, 261, 269, 275, 294, 296, 299, 308, 310, 326, 345, 349, 366, 368, 369, 377, 390, 409, and the Redpath Press at McGill University.*

## THE MINORITY BOOK SOCIETY *by Hazel Frame*

THE MINORITY BOOK SOCIETY has been formed recently with the aim of doing for literature what the English Stage Society has done for the drama. The Society intends to sponsor and encourage works of literary merit which, perhaps because of their experimental nature, are not given the attention or support they deserve.

The Society is a non-profit making organization, but it is hoped that it will pay its way eventually through members' subscriptions (which are initially three guineas a year for six books). This is a unique venture in co-operative publishing, for the books will be published by the members themselves, and their suggestions will be welcomed. Members of the Council include Mrs Neville Blond (Chairman), the Countess of Harewood, Lady Snow, Ronald Duncan, John Stevens, Anthony Blond and J. E. Blacksell. On the panel of selectors are Anthony Godwin (Chairman), Frank Kermode, John Bayley, Elizabeth Jennings, John Bowen and Sylvester Stein.

Titles for the Society's first list are at the moment being selected. Works of contemporary literature in any category, including translations, are being considered. Suitable works should be sent to me at The Minority Book Society, 56 Doughty Street, London, W.C.1.

## REVIEWS

Reviews of new books are usually confined to publications otherwise little-known, such as the output of the private press movement, or material deserving especial mention. Signed reviews (for which no payment is made) may be submitted for publication in *The Private Library*.

*The Lewis Carroll handbook*: being a new version of *A handbook of the literature of the Rev. C. L. Dodgson* by Sidney Herbert Williams and Falconer Madan, first published in 1931; now revised, augmented and brought up to 1960 by Roger Lancelyn Green. xvi, 307 pp. Oxford U.P., 63s.

Mr Green, who edited the *Diaries of Lewis Carroll* for Cassell in 1953, has pursued Carrolliana for twenty-five years; now at last his revision of Williams and Madan is published, and we have the picture clear up to 1960. He has added a new description of the first issue of the first edition of *Alice's adventures in Wonderland*, as there is now a perfect copy in the B.M., and includes certain extracts from Dodgson's letters to his publishers, Messrs Macmillan. Those engaged, like the present reviewer, in a bibliography of a contemporary author, may be consoled by the presence, even in Mr Green's indefatigable researches, of a page of addenda, one of which dates back to 1901!

P.W.

## RECENT PRIVATE PRESS BOOKS

In recent years British book publishers have received much justifiable criticism from various quarters on the unenterprising appearance of their products. The same charge can—with good reason—be levelled against most private-press owners, particularly with regard to the binding of their limited editions, which are generally sewn in paper wrappers or, at best, cased in plain cloth boards with a paper label (sometimes hideous) bearing the title of the book.

It is therefore most refreshing to note two particularly 'adventurous' productions which have recently been published: *The Nightingale and the Rose*, and *Unless the Grain Die*. The former, a fairy tale by Oscar Wilde, has been issued from the press of George Percival and Rigby Graham<sup>1</sup>, and is a most beautiful book by any standards. The text, and accompanying full-page illustrations by Graham, were printed for the publishers by the Cistercian Monks of Mount St Bernard Abbey, and the book is bound in Continental style with aquamarine green metallic boards and pink metallic satin doublures. The covers and doublures bear the 'rose' motif blocked in gold, and the whole is much enhanced by the introduction of binder's brasses to the decoration of the title-page and chapter opening. Percival and Graham were also responsible for the binding of *Unless the Grain Die*, the recent Stanbrook Abbey Press publication<sup>2</sup>. This is a translation from St Augustine of Hippo and St Ignatius of Antioch, which is aptly described as 'an act of praise' in which two voices—one from the East, the other from the West—proclaim the wisdom hidden beneath the paradoxical metaphor of the title. Handset throughout in

1. Percival and Graham, Leicester. *Not for sale*.

2. Stanbrook Abbey Press, Callow End, Worcester. 15 gns.; 10 gns.; 9 gns.; 4 gns. (*Prospectus available*).

van Krimpen's Spectrum type, the 'grain' metaphor is perpetuated throughout the book in Margaret Adams' initials and tail-pieces, and the title device blocked in gold. An initial and a tailpiece from this book illustrated Philip Ward's article on the Press in *The Private Library* for January 1962. A few copies have been printed throughout on John Mason's Silurian paper, the remainder of the edition being printed on Linda Badger handmade, with endpapers and half-titles on the Mason paper. This book is a worthy successor to the now famous *Path to Peace* by Siegfried Sassoon, published from Stanbrook in 1960.

Enterprise of a very different kind is to be found in *The Golden City* by Ralph Chubb<sup>3</sup>. One of the few survivors of the presses established between the wars, Chubb worked in the tradition of William Blake, producing books of a prophetic and mystical nature by hand-lithography, and writing out the text in a rather clumsy script which somehow failed to harmonise with the accompanying powerful, and often beautiful, illustrations. Chubb's death in 1960 left *The Golden City* unfinished and it has now been completed and published thanks to the industry and affection of the artist's sister, Miss Muriel Chubb, who procured the services of a professional lithographer to complete the printing of the title-page, table of contents, and colophon. The edition of only 18 copies was hand-bound by Sangorski & Sutcliffe. Even if one cannot understand or appreciate Ralph Chubb's mysticism, one must be grateful to Miss Chubb for publishing a posthumous volume of strange beauty, an event which is rare in the private press field.

A name famous in the annals of the early private press movement is that of J. H. Mason. Now, from the equally well-known Twelve by Eight Press comes *John Mason, R D I*, subtitled, 'a selection from the notebooks of a scholar-printer by his son, John Mason'<sup>4</sup>. Much of interest to the student of the 'golden age' of the private press is contained in this slim volume, including an interesting account of the preparation for, and printing of, the famous Doves Bible. The text, which is handset in Baskerville, is well illustrated with twelve line drawings by Rigby Graham, who is also responsible for the cover design.

Sir Francis Meynell's *Poems & Pieces 1911 to 1961* was published some months ago from his Nonesuch Press in a limited edition of 750 copies<sup>5</sup>. Well printed by the Stellar Press on handmade paper bearing the Nonesuch watermark, the chaste appearance of this book (designed with meticulous attention to detail) will be viewed with nostalgia by those familiar with the pre-war books from this press, and should be greeted with enthusiasm by new subscribers.

During the brief period of its existence the Pandora Press has been extremely active. Since its establishment early in 1961, no less than four volumes have been issued. As can be expected with books produced in such rapid succession, they have many features in common: all are set in Baskerville type and all are most effectively bound in Elephant Hide, three being in paper covers. The titles are: *The Natural World*, an essay by John Clare<sup>6</sup>, *The Sheepheard's Commendation of his Nymph*, by Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford<sup>7</sup>, and Swinburne's *The Garden of Prosperine*<sup>8</sup>. The most ambitious publication is also the most recent. Shelley's *Lines Written among the Euganean Hills*<sup>9</sup> is bound in boards and contains an introductory note to the poem by Thea Scott. All four books are illustrated with line drawings by Rigby Graham, printed in various colours.

The indefatigable Graham is also responsible for the delightful multi-coloured illustrations which decorate *Some Fragments of Chinese Philosophy*, a first publication from the newly-founded Bootham Press<sup>10</sup>. This choice little book, bound in Chinese style in orange cloth boards, contains moral tales, inscriptions from paintings, and a chapter on Chinese mythology.

'The Printing Press that a Press-man works at, is a Machine invented upon mature

3. Miss Muriel Chubb, Fair Oak Cottage, Ashford Hill, nr. Newbury, Berks. 10 *gns.* (o.p.).
4. Twelve by Eight Press, 2 Ratcliffe Road, Leicester. 15s.
5. Nonesuch Press, 10 Earlham Street, London. 25s.
6. Pandora Press, 48 Walton Street, Leicester. 3s 6d.
7. *Ibid.* 5s.
8. *Ibid.* 7s 6d.
9. *Ibid.* 25s.
10. Bootham Press, 31 East Parade, Heworth, York. 12s.

consideration of Mechanic Powers, deducted from Geometrick Principles; and therefore a *Press-man* indowed with a competency of the Inventers Genius, will not only find great satisfaction in the contemplation of the harmonious design and Make of a *Press*, but as often as any Member, or part of it is out of order, he will know how to remedy any deficiency in it. This alone will intitle him to be an Understanding *Press-man* . . .' These lines, from Moxon's *Mechanic Exercises* of 1684 introduce *The Office Press*, issued by David Chambers from his Cuckoo Hill Press<sup>11</sup>. This is a fascinating account of the conversion of an old office letter-copying press into an efficient printing press. The text of the booklet was printed on an Alexandra handpress, but the Office Press was responsible for title-page and colophon. The results on these pages more than justify the experiment and show beyond doubt that there is indeed 'an Understanding *Press-man*' at Cuckoo Hill.

Linocuts are often employed to illustrate private press productions, but seldom are they used to better effect than in John Charnock's little book of *Castles and Cathedrals*<sup>12</sup>. Accompanying the short descriptive text of each building are fourteen superb full-page illustrations cut by the author. Unfortunately, the paper on which they are printed is of rather poorer quality than the illustrations deserve, and it can only be hoped that, if a reprint is considered, the publisher will remedy this only defect in an otherwise excellent publication.

Although not particularly original in design, *Amata Loquitur* by Herbert P. Horne is a meticulously-set and well-printed booklet<sup>13</sup>. The poem was first published in 1888, when it appeared in *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, a quarterly magazine of the arts and crafts.

From Ireland comes *Translations* by J. M. Synge which are edited from the original manuscripts by Robin Skelton<sup>14</sup>. These translations of prose and poetry by Villon, Leopardi, Petrarch and others were first published along with Synge's poems in a Cuala Press volume in 1909. Well-printed in Centaur type, this edition is quarter-bound in grey paper boards with vellum spine and is contained in a slip-case. It is distributed outside Ireland by Oxford University Press.

A slighter, paperbound book from the same press is *Ireland in Maps*<sup>15</sup>. This is an introduction to Irish cartography by John Andrews and was published on the occasion of an exhibition arranged by the Geographical Society of Ireland and the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, and includes a catalogue of that exhibition. It is generously illustrated with a number of early maps of Ireland, one of which – the Rome *Ptolemy* – dates back to the second century A.D.

T.R.

11. Cuckoo Hill Press, 41 Cuckoo Hill Road, Pinner, Middx. 7s.
12. Shelter Press, 7 Cobham Road, Moreton, Wirral, Cheshire. *Unpriced.*
13. Nonpareil Press, 37 Lostock Road, Davyhulme, Urmston, Manchester. *Not for sale.*
14. Dolmen Press, 42 Upper Mount Street, Dublin, Eire.
15. *Ibid.* 5s.

## Notes on Contributors

HELMUT AND ALISON GERNSHEIM

are the authors of the standard *History of photography* (Oxford University Press). Their private collection presents unusual problems of classification and storage; similar problems face Peter Murray, Witt Librarian in the Courtauld Institute of Art, whose contribution on his collection of art photographs appears in our next issue.

ROBERT L. COLLISON

is the Hon. Treasurer of the Society of Indexers and former Reference Librarian of Westminster. The author of two manuals of indexing technique, his latest compilation is the Newnes *Dictionary of dates*.

A. C. COOPER

was Pressman to the Golden Cockerel Press from 1922 to 1932. We thank him, together with the compilers and publishers of *Robert Gibbings: a bibliography*, by A. Mary Kirkus, edited by Patience Empson and John Harris" (Dent, 50s) for permission to reprint appendix B, with the plan of the Press. The accompanying illustration of Mr Cooper at work, inking, does not appear in the book, but is reproduced with Mr Cooper's permission.

A. N. L. MUNBY

is Librarian of King's College, Cambridge. Among his publications are the extensive *Phillipps Studies* and the recent pioneering *Cult of the autograph letter in England* (Athlone Press, 21s).

DAVID CHAMBERS

is Hon. Publications Secretary and a member of the Council of the P.L.A. "Collecting fine printing" and "Bournemouth's bookshops" are the titles of two of his previous contributions to this journal.

JOHN MASON

has written *Papermaking as an artistic craft* (Faber & Faber, 18s) and runs the Twelve by Eight Paper Mill and Press as an amateur. He is a professional hand binder and lecturer on Book Production, and is at present revising his article on "The Ark Press", which appeared in these columns in July 1957.

THOMAS RAE

is one of our regular reviewers of "Recent private press books". He edited, with Geoffrey Handley-Taylor, *The book of the private press*, and has been a joint-editor of the annual *Private press books* since its inception. His Signet Press is one of the more ambitious modern British presses.

The name of John Roberts Press is well known to collectors of fine editions and privately printed books. Their productions range from the twenty-guinea magnificence of a folio 'Song of Songs' to the more modest charm of 'Twelve by Eight', recently published by the Private Libraries Association.

Many bibliophiles cause small books to be privately printed, so to clothe some favoured item in worthy typographical dress. They may cost little more than a good Christmas card – though there is, of course, no limit at the opposite end of the scale.

Those contemplating the production of a book or booklet 'printed for their friends' may expect interested co-operation from John Roberts Press Ltd, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London EC1.