



OXFORD GUILD OF PRINTERS

NEWSLETTER

December 2012

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AGM Report: 3rd December

This year's AGM passed off without loss of blood. Significant topics discussed were as follows:

The Wayzgoose was generally felt to be, in the words of Sellar & Yeatman, 'A Good Thing' and it was agreed to arrange the event again at the same venue, Oxford Brookes and at the same time, mid-October, in 2014.

The OGP Private Press Prize has been launched and will receive publicity in the next issue of *Parenthesis*. This is to be a prize to be awarded at the Fine Press Book Fair 2013 of a cheque for £100 for a book printed letterpress, costing £50 or less and published since the last Oxford Fair in 2011.

The judges may care to consider aspects of design & typography, quality of printing, originality and interest of content but really whatever they think is a good private press book. Contenders will not need to have a stand at the Fair; it is intended to ask for submissions (returnable) to be delivered to an area to be specified at the time, on the Saturday morning of the Fair for judging the same day. A 'book' will be defined as at least eight printed pages.

I understand that it has not always a simple matter to nominate judges for the Judges' Choice Awards and I have undertaken to provide judges for this prize. I have already accepted a volunteer but would be glad to hear of anyone else who feels they might be able to undertake this interesting responsibility.

If this prize process seems to be a success [Ed: If you win, you mean] and funds allow, we will repeat it.

The Committee was thanked for their efforts by Simon Haviland in a motion kindly proposed by him. It was re-elected unopposed with the adjustment of the role of Membership Secretary: these duties now devolve entirely upon Christabel Hardacre.

Chairman ~ Miles Wigfield

Vice Chairman ~ Richard Lawrence

Treasurer ~ Michael Daniell

Membership Secretary ~ Christabel Hardacre

Newsletter Editor ~ Liz Adams

Website ~ Brian Clarke

Events Secretary ~ Miles Wigfield

Ex officio ~ Paul Nash

Guild meetings

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

Monday 4th February

Victoria Stevens, a book conservator working at the Oxford Conservation Consortium, will present an illustrated talk entitled *Deceptive appearances: the conservation of Remelin's 'Captoptrum Microcosmicum'*. The 'Captoptrum Microcosmicum' was the earliest printed example of a particular type of anatomical illustration when it was published in 1619. Although by first appearances an unpromising object, the text block contains some binding delights as well as some hidden printed treasures made accessible by the conservation treatment carried out during 2011. The talk will also highlight later editions of the book as a small illustration of how the printer's art has been diluted by financial considerations throughout history.

I raised the point that I thought there was value in the idea that members of the committee should change more often to allow fresh blood (and ideas) to permeate. There seemed to be very little interest from the floor for this idea.

The Committee had previously shown agreement for the suggestion that the Guild might donate to a fund for the restoration of a Cossar Press at the National Museum of Scotland. I undertook to confirm that this restoration would be to working order and that the press would be used.

Finally it was suggested that the Guild might care to institute an Annual OGP Picnic on similar lines to that held by the Society of Wood Engravers. A member offers their garden or space and you just turn up with food either to share or perhaps just for yourself. We could perhaps go on to hold egg-and-spoon or three-legged races. Who knows? More prizes?
Miles Wigfield

Treasurer's Report

The accounts approved at the AGM on 3 December showed the Guild's current funds as £3108, slightly down from the £3405 total in 2011. The main item of expenditure was the production of the prizewinning book from the short story competition.

The October Waygoose broke even if sales of the Silver Jubilee Compendium are taken into account: the sales probably would not have happened if there had not been an opportunity to display the material.

Monthly running costs of the Guild just about equal the income from subscriptions and for this reason it was agreed to hold the subscription rate at £15 for 2013. Christabel Hardacre has kindly agreed to take on the role of Membership Secretary and members are asked to send their 2013 subscriptions to her (see renewal form enclosed with this newsletter).

At 1 December the Guild had 99 members, up from 89 at the same time a year ago.
Michael Daniell

OGP Printing "on Show"

Sufficient members have shown an interest and the complete "bundle" will be collated and mailed with the April 2013 *Newsletter*. It is still possible to have an item included; if you wish to do so please advise Peter White by February 11th. This will be an opportunity to display that rare font, your finest letter spacing and to demonstrate how to make a good impression.

It is not, however, a competition and all members will be welcome to participate whatever their level of skill.

We have a number of members far-flung around England and it has been suggested that this project might appeal to those who find it difficult to attend meetings. If this initiative is appreciated it might be repeated on a future occasion. Feed-back, either to the editor or to Peter White, will be welcome.

Monday 4th March

Clive Hurst from the Bodleian Library will talk on the recently purchased Cheney Archive. The OGP contributed a modest sum to the appeal.

Monday 8th April

Lida Cordozo Kindersley 'Set in Stone' (NB This is the second not the first Monday of the month).

Tuesday 7th May

John Randle: *Vance Gerry and the Weather Bird Press*. For those members who missed it, John will give a reprise of his Alan Hancox Memorial Lecture given at the Cheltenham Literary Festival in 2012.

Thursday 30th May

Visit to the Wormsley Library, arranged by the late Dr Simon McMinn and described by him thus:

Wormsley is the country house at the top of the Chiltern scarp beside the M40 that was the home of Sir Paul Getty, heir to an oil fortune. He built a library specifically for his book collection – a castellated fort with a classical Doric portico – next to the main house.

The library is beautifully furnished and air conditioned. The books are the greatest collection of illustrated books and special bindings in private hands, similar in quality to the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York and collected, with the help of unlimited funds, over his lifetime from the age

The requirements are:

- No theme: just use your imagination to create the profound, witty, or ephemeral
- Maximum size: single leaf to fit into a DL envelope
- Quantity: 120 copies
- Process : no restriction

Delivery by Friday 1st March to: Peter White, Bouncing Acre Press, 68 Cross Oak Rd, Berkhamsted HP4 3HZ Phone: 01442 866223 Email: whitepj@btconnect.com

Note from Nick Birchall

I have been approached by a researcher asking for Fleet Street workers who were involved with the Wapping Dispute of 1986. Would any one in the Oxford Guild of Printers have any contacts with people who were there or any information on the NGA v Murdoch case? The 30 year anniversary is approaching so interest is building. I would ask anyone interested in passing on information to contact me and I will send the researcher's details so you can make contact (N.B. I will not forward your e-mail address or use your name).

Nick Birchall, Cleeve Press
Phone: 01162 673459
Email: nickgraphic@yahoo.co.uk

'For the Snark was a Boojum'

The business of the AGM over, the fun began. Miles Wigfield led us on a merry dance through his collection of illustrated editions of *The Hunting of the Snark* by Lewis Carroll. Those of the audience who had done their homework and read (or re-read) the *Snark* before the meeting were able to keep up with talk of bells, Boojums, Boots and Billiard-makers. We marvelled at the breadth of Miles' collection, both on the screen and in the many volumes which we passed happily around the room. Everyone had their favourites, I'm sure, but I particularly liked the Mervyn Peake interpretation, published in 1941 by Chatto & Windus. The original illustrations by Holiday (one of which is pictured to the right) are, however, hard to beat.

Dr Selwyn Goodacre continued the merry-making with an explication of just how many 'first editions' of the *Snark* exist to tempt the avid collector. It emerged that Lewis Carroll himself is partly responsible for this collecting frenzy, having asked Macmillan, the original publisher, for a number of different bindings for presentation. Never quite knowing what rarity Selwyn would whip from his suitcase next, our interest was once again engaged after the AGM.

According to that oh-so-reliable reference source, Wikipedia, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, on reading the *Snark*, became convinced that it was written about him. Quite why is another mystery. Answers on a postcard, please.

Liz Adams

of sixteen. The collection was accumulated with the aid of Maggs and is now in the hands of Bryan Maggs who conducts tours for private parties on a regular basis. It includes the earliest English manuscript (c. ad 640), numerous highly illustrated medieval books, and some stunning bindings from 16th to 20th centuries.

Details will follow. Numbers will be limited to 30. Please contact Miles Wigfield to book.

Monday 3rd June

Martyn Ould (Old School Press): *Daily Life at the 18th-Century Oxford Bible Press: The Witness of the 1772 Large Quarto Bible.*



