



OXFORD GUILD OF PRINTERS

NEWSLETTER

July 2013

Editor Liz Adams 07813 807 453

Chairman

Miles Wigfield 01285 750662

Vice-Chairman

Richard Lawrence 01865 424594

Treasurer

Michael Daniell 01865 510378

Membership Secretary

Christabel Hardacre

Meeting recall: Linotype the film

OGP member Graham Moss not only brought us the film but he also provided us with a keepsake: a printing of Kenneth Grahame's poem 'Mr Toad' set in Linotype Baskerville by Andy Taylor (www.theelrodpress.com). Something of the exuberance of Mr Toad brushed off on the story of the Linotype machine and its inventor, the US immigrant watchmaker Ottmar Mergenthaler (1854-1899).

The typesetting machine was described in its day as 'The Eighth Wonder of the World' though eyebrows might have been raised when it was claimed that the machine 'pushed the mind of Man ahead a thousand years in the space of a generation'.

We saw ranks of linotype compositors confronting the 90 keys of their keyboards, the layout of which was distinctive, neither alphabetical in sequence nor following the QWERTY system of the typewriter keyboard. And this introduced us to the cryptic sequence 'etaoin shrdlu': when a compositor was aware of making a mistake, they marked the faulty line by sweeping their finger down the two left-hand columns of the keyboard, so producing the easily identifiable sequence 'etaoin shrdlu'. Theoretically this enabled the slug containing the faulty line to be removed by hand before going to press, though in the haste of newspaper composition it sometimes survived to mystify the reader.

Slugs are what linotype is about; each line set as a whole without the need for leading. We were introduced to the distinctive sounds of the process: the clunks and the squirts, accompanied by the sight of the matrices for each letter sliding down a chute. We soon appreciated how the equation of typesetting was transformed from 'minutes per line' to 'lines per minute'.

The end came in the 1970s when linotype was superseded by photo typesetting and we were shown scenes of machines being taken off to breakers' yards — that is unless they were lucky enough to join the treasured company preserved by museums and enthusiasts.

Thanks, Graham, for providing us with such an absorbing film and for setting us dreaming of owning a linotype machine bought for five dollars.

Michael H. Daniell

Guild meetings

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

Sunday 4th August

A new venture: the OGP Picnic. Liz Adams will host a picnic gathering at her home on the banks of the Thames in Oxford. Details overleaf. (No meeting on Monday)

Monday 2nd September

George Ramsden: Stone Trough Books: 'Tribulations of a Publishing Bookseller'.

Monday 7th October

Anthony Eyre of The Letter Press, Cirencester.

2nd & 3rd November

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

2nd December AGM

4th February

Tim Honnor of the Piccolo Press. Details to follow.

P.T.O

Notes from the Chairman

Oxford Fine Press Book Fair – 2nd & 3rd November

The Guild has a half-table booked. I hope it may be next to my table but I would be grateful for volunteers to 'man' it. If I had the names of six people who could agree to do, say, two hours I would be much gratified. Don't forget the OGP Private Press Prize. It would be good to have as many entries as possible, to be submitted on the day.

OGP Picnic: 4th August

Now that the summer has arrived, please make sure that the inaugural OGP picnic is in your diaries. Join us from noon at the University College Boathouse for letterpress-related shenanigans and general conviviality. Please bring your own picnic fare (to share or not as you please); tables, chairs, and tea-making facilities will be provided. The boathouse is located behind the Oxford Spires Four Pillars Hotel on the banks of the River Thames – it's a bit of adventure to get to, but worth the effort! If the sunny weather doesn't hold, there is plenty of undercover outdoor space. Please contact the editor if you are able to come; details of parking and how to get to the boathouse will be sent by post or email. There is limited parking next to the building for anyone with mobility issues, as well as a lift to the upper floor.

Glastonbury Free Press update

Despite some mechanical hiccups, the team of printers at Glastonbury Festival produced the first ever edition of the Glastonbury Free Press at 2:00 am on the Sunday morning of the festival. The paper proved so popular that all 15,000 copies quickly disappeared. A pdf version of the newspaper, along with a short video of the production process and some photographs, can be viewed at the news section of the official Glastonbury website. A brief video featuring Dennis Gould can be found on YouTube. There have been hints that the 2013 edition won't be the last.

Eynsham Bookbinding Workshops

Saturday 21st September: Single Section

Make a simple, single-section notebook with marbled paper covers and a hand-printed label. You will begin to learn about the materials, tools and terminology used in traditional bookbinding.

Saturday 28th September: Long Stitch

Make an attractive multi-section journal with a leather wrap-around cover. You will be introduced to the skills and techniques of hand-sewing a book, and learn how to work with, and decorate leather.

Saturday 5th October: Coptic Style

Make a book with solid wooden boards. This simplified version of a historic Coptic binding will introduce you to some basic bookbinding techniques and materials.

Contact Arthur Green (email: arthurgreen@yahoo.co.uk or phone: 07921 457 174). No experience necessary. Cost: £65 per day.

Monday 3rd March: Peter Baldwin: The Delos Press and Philippe Jaccottet.

Monday 7th April

Martin Andrews: Fox Talbot Photographer.

918 Letterpress Ephemera Show

The 918 Letterpress Ephemera Show will take place from the 18th October to November 29th 2013 at the Samford University Art Gallery in Birmingham, AL, USA.

Why not share your wonderful work with the world? It's free to enter; it's prestigious to be in a juried show; and most importantly, you'll get free advertising for you and your press.

If your work is accepted in the show, it will become part of the permanent collection at Samford University. The work will be used to help inspire students for years to come.

For further details and to submit your work for consideration in the 918 Letterpress Ephemera Show, see the website: letterpressephemera.com. Work must be submitted digitally by the 5th of September.

