



# OXFORD GUILD OF PRINTERS NEWSLETTER

February 2019

Editor Liz Adams 07813 807 453

Chairman: Miles Wigfield 01285 750662

Vice-Chairman: Richard Lawrence 01865 424594

Treasurer: Joe Swift 01285 821345

Membership Secretary: Christabel Hardacre

01608 654004

## MEETING RECALL

### Daryl Green: Peter Apian's Typography & Initials

This talk built on the OGP visit to the Magdalen College Library in May 2017 when members were able to study Peter Apian's *Astronomical Compendium* as well as other treasured books in the library.

Peter Apian (1495-1552), also known as Petrus Apianus, was a mathematician, astronomer and printer. His *Astronomicum Cæsareum*, so called because of its dedication to his patron Emperor Charles V, uses a series of wonderful paper models (or volvelles) of the Ptolemaic system, which could be rotated to predict a planet's celestial latitude and longitude at any time and date. It was Charles' financial support that enabled the best available materials and expertise to be used during the five years it took to complete the work. The team included the great German painter and illustrator Michael Ostendorfer and the exquisite woodcuts were made by Apian's brother George. The result is more than a book, it is an astronomical compendium and a showpiece. Respect for the work by its wealthy owners has meant that there are still 110 copies in existence, mostly in good condition and full working order.

The images from Magdalen's copy showed how, in Ptolemy's model, most planets moved around a small sphere (the epicycle) that in turn moved around a larger sphere (the deferent). This is similar to how we now see the Moon as orbiting the Earth and also following the Earth's larger orbit around the Sun. The complexity of this example of computer hardware was not exceeded until Charles Babbage built his machine 300 years later.

During the OGP visit there was much discussion about the mystery of the colophon that has been printed in reverse. These few lines would have required around 25 new letters to be cut especially for the purpose. There are no known examples of this anywhere else and the reason for it remains obscure. Was it an Apian joke? or was it a nod to his contemporary genius Leonardo da Vinci's mirror writing?

Magdalen College Library is very proud of its work by Peter Apian and Daryl encouraged us to contact him to come in to take a closer look at the *Astronomical Compendium* as well as other books in the library. *Tony Lloyd*

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

**Please note the new venue for the March meeting:** Monday 4th March in 'The Study' at The Oxford Retreat (1-2, Hythe Bridge Street, OX1 2EW). Guild Member Patrick Goosens will talk on 'Saving Type: ATF to ATF: the fortunes of type foundries in the 21st century' (where the As stand for 'American' and 'Antwerp' respectively). Please make this new venture a success — by coming. We shall be eating there beforehand.

There will be a second meeting in March: at 7:30pm on 13th in the Charlbury Memorial Hall in association with the Charlbury Arts Society. That luminary of the Department of Typography & Graphic Design at Reading University, Martin Andrews, will be talking about the colour woodcut printing of Allen W. Seaby.

## GUILD MEETINGS

Please check the latest *Newsletter* for meeting locations, but from March 2019, meetings will generally be held at The Oxford Retreat in central Oxford; at 7:30 for 8:00pm. There is parking nearby in Worcester Street or Gloucester Green Car Parks, with easy access to buses, trains, and the Park & Rides.

**4th March:** Patrick Goosens: 'Saving Type: ATF to ATF: the fortunes of type foundries in the 21st century.'

**Wednesday 13th March:** Combined meeting with the Charlbury Arts Society at the Charlbury Memorial Hall, 7:30pm. Martin Andrews: 'Allen W. Seaby and his colour woodcut printing.'

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

**13th May:** To be confirmed.

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

**1st July:** To be confirmed.

**August:** No meeting.

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

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

**4th November:** Simon Lawrence: '40 Happy Years at the Fleece Press.'

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

Other speakers planned for 2019: Richard Falkiner, Sophie Mortimer, Graham Twemlow.

## SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

The subscription of £20 for 2019 is now overdue. If you have not already sent your payment to Christabel Hardacre, please see the December *Newsletter* for further details. Prompt payment is much appreciated.

**Wayzgoose:** Saturday 2nd November at Oxford Brookes University in Headington. Tables are being snapped up. To avoid disappointment act now! Enquiries to Miles Wigfield.

**Loose ends:**

The editor, Liz Adams, is still hoping to hear from someone prepared to assist her editing the Newsletter.

Would anybody like to host the Guild Picnic this year? It's usually held at the end of July or early in August.

Any ideas for a summer jaunt that would save your Chairman having to dredge his almost bankrupt fund of ideas?

## EPHEMERA ON SHOW 2019

Please be reminded about this year's Ephemera on Show. Contributions don't need to be complicated: print whatever you like, at any size between postage-stamp and A4. One hundred and fifty copies will ensure that every paid-up member gets a full set of Ephemera in the Spring. Production deadline is end of March 2019. Early birds can hand their ephemera to Margaret Condon at a meeting; or you can post them to Jane Russ, Hare Cottage, 3 Gibbs Close, Westbury, Wilts, BA13 3DT. Any queries? Please contact Margaret on [mail@mmcondon.plus.com](mailto:mail@mmcondon.plus.com)

## PRINTER IN RESIDENCE

Applications are now open for the next Printer-in-Residence at the Bodleian Bibliographical Press. For more information, see the website: [www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/csb/bibpress/printer-in-residence](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/csb/bibpress/printer-in-residence)

## MELVILLE'S 'MOBY DICK'

In a similar vein to the recent Shakespeare's Sonnets Project, the call is out for printers across the globe to produce one of the extracts from Melville's *Moby Dick* to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the author's birth. For the list of available extracts (hurry — they're going fast!) and an application form, see: [www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/csb/bibpress/moby-dick-extracts-2019](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/csb/bibpress/moby-dick-extracts-2019)

**N.B.** If you plan to contribute and would like to sign-up for a portfolio of extracts produced by other Guild members (in a similar vein to that produced by our Chairman and Treasurer for Shakespeare's Sonnets), please contact the Editor.

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## NOTES FROM MEMBERS

**Simon Lawrence** at the Fleece Press in Yorkshire hopes to move to a smaller workshop and has for sale three presses: the Vicobold used by Ken Hardacre at the Kit Kat Press, (single phase motor, runs off domestic electricity), £550; an Autovic believed to be in good order but not used, with motor, £150; and a Heidelberg KSBA cylinder in mint condition £4750, all plus VAT. Take your pick! Details from: [simon@fleecepress.com](mailto:simon@fleecepress.com)

**Martyn Ould:** The second volume of *Printing at the University Press, Oxford, 1660-1780* by Martyn Ould is now available from The Old School Press. It covers in detail the type used by the Press's compositors, its sources, costs, and uses. Details and photos of the standard and *de luxe* editions at [www.theoldschoolpress.com](http://www.theoldschoolpress.com).



**Nicholas Birchall:** Cleeve Press has endeavoured through sustained and patient application the emergence of a wholly new fount. The *Maylis* letterforms influenced by pen-drawn uncial letters are brush-drawn and display a fair countenance. The five inch high master letters consist of 31 uppercase (displayed left), 34 lowercase including ligatures and 20 punctuation marks, symbols and numerals. The exercise foreseen is to engrave the Uppercase as wood-letters and present endorsing benefactors with a wholly original hand printed & limited edition broadsheet of the final engravings. To secure one of the forty limited edition broadsheets please forward £12.00 to Nicholas J. Birchall of Cleeve Press [cleevepress.co.uk](http://cleevepress.co.uk) or [cleevepress@gmail.com](mailto:cleevepress@gmail.com)

## NEW MEMBER SNIPPET

**Owen Legg:** After printing for over 50 years it is time for me to look back and wonder how I ever did so much. The books began 46 years ago and have been exhibited at Oxford over a 40 year period. But I am still experimenting. The books have been mainly done with letterpress and linocuts. Two years ago did an *Abecedarium* with lithography & at the moment doing another with the letters formed by masking out text, the text being sayings of William Morris. This is a very small edition of 10 as the process is very time consuming.

## MYSTERIOUS COLOPHON

Below is an image of the mysterious colophon from Apian's *Astronomicum Cæsareum*. It's been suggested that 25 new letters were cut purely for this work, but a very heavy blind impression on the reverse with some precise hand-inking may also have produced the same result (thanks to Nick Birchall for this suggestion). Neither method would be easy, so the reason behind this colophon may remain a mystery. Editor

Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful. William Morris, 1882.  
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\*\*\*\*\*  
It took me years to understand that words are not as important as experience, but we make experience last. It took me years to understand that words are as important as experience. Words make experience last. \*\*\*\*\*  
History remembers the kings and warriors, because they were destroyed; art has remembered the people, because they were created.  
I do not want art for a few any more than education for a few, or freedom for a few. \*\*\*\*\* William Morris

My test sheet for an alphabet book.  
Owen Legg 2019

