



OXFORD GUILD OF PRINTERS

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# NEWSLETTER

March 2013

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## "Printing on Show" in April 2013

The "Cabinet of Printing Curiosities" enclosed with this newsletter will act as an additional communication channel between members. Without being in any way a competition it will provide, it is hoped, amusement and diversion. It may also stimulate active members to share their mutual enthusiasm for print in a practical form.

If this initiative is well received the exercise might be repeated. Items witty, trivial, ephemeral or profound will be welcome. Entries will be welcome and open to members at all levels of skills – from the novice to elite "devils".

Over one third of our members have, apparently, printing presses – or at least a Press name. Some machines may be gathering dust under wraps; perhaps they could be inked up and brought back in to production. Over one third of our members are more than fifty miles from Oxford – perhaps too far to attend meetings in Charlbury regularly.

The opportunity to contribute to a future "Printing on Show" will perhaps help them feel closer to home in the Guild.

With thanks to the following contributors:

Liz Adams • Juxon Press, Oxford

Nick Birchall • Cleeve Press, Leicester

Ben Brundell • British Letterpress, Sowerby Bridge

Brian Clarke • Balscote Press, Banbury

Michael Daniell • The Atlantis Press, Wolvercote

Louisa Hare • First Folio Cards, Banbury

Paul Hatcher • Allamanda Press, Woodley

Geoff Hulett • The Sign of the Gemini, Stanmore

Richard Lawrence • Thumbprint, Oxford

Graham Moss • Incline Press, Oldham

Victoria Stevens • Tin Mill Press

Peter White • Bouncing Acre Press, Berkhamsted

Miles Wigfield • The Reading Room Press, Quenington

Please feedback comments to Miles Wigfield or Liz Adams.

## 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.

### Monday 8th April

Lida Cordozo Kindersley 'Set in Stone' (NB This is the 2nd not the 1st 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.

### 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*.

*P.T.O.*

## Meeting recall:

In 2011 the Guild donated £500 to the appeal by the Bodleian Library for funds to purchase the Cheney Archive, so we were looking forward to hearing what our money had been spent on. Clive Hurst, Head of Rare Books and Printed Ephemera at the Bodleian came to tell (and show) us.

Richard Russell kindly agreed to introduce Clive as he had known the Cheney family and indeed told us of the last of that family still alive. Printed business cards from the firm claimed it had been founded in 1771 though history suggests it may have been earlier. It had flourished until the late 1980s when the relentless march of progress in the printing industry and, perhaps, a dearth of Cheney progeny led to its closure.

Clive admitted that while there was much to show there was much less to talk about. There was an odd and frustrating absence of true 'archive' material while there was no shortage of printed ephemera. As a result details of print-runs, costs, suppliers &c were in short supply and the plethora of examples of their printed work, many of them quite possibly unique, formed the basis of our entertainment.

Early posters didn't shy from the salacious: "Fun upon Fun: Stark Naked West Country Wedding", "The Amorous Lady's Garland or the Handsome Butcher of St James' Market" or tragic: "Yarmouth Tragedy or The Constant Lovers" or mundane: "Effectual Method for Destroying, Rats, Mice, Polecats, Weasels, Moles and Otters" and "The Wormleighton Pig Club - Rules". Probity may, on occasions, have been sacrificed for profit: while the "Tontine 5 year Society" may have been a legitimate life insurance wheeze, the 1815 State Lottery offering prizes, "3 of £30,000 and 5 of 1,000 guineas" can't have been entirely above water.

John Cheney's seem always to have been at the firm's helm though there was a time when Esther Cheney held sway. We saw reports of her £100 fine for failing to pay tax and of later trouble for the illegal selling of medicines. She was quick to see a market in buying London Almanacs and 'rebranding' them with printed wrappers of a parochial content and wasn't above tugging at the townspeople of Banbury's heartstrings with news of her husband's death and her struggle to feed her five children.

Clive showed us a profusion of later examples of Cheney's work rather of the monumental mason late-Victorian style. More to my taste were the earlier rebarbative posters (the sort Bill Stickers might have been prosecuted for displaying) relating to politics. An election result poster showing a Whig victory over the Conservatives: "Supreme Effort (lost)" and another exhorting the electors of Banbury to "Reject the Gold of the Conservative[s]! ... Denounce ... Mean Trickery & Despicable Intimidation". In 1831 Lord Norreys urgently "Wanted ... A Calf-Cart and a pair of Asses ..." to take Freeholders to the poll to vote for him.

Finally, during what was a most enjoyable evening, I was touched to see two bordered sheets from one of the Johns with end-of-term samples of, for a six-year old, an extraordinarily accomplished calligraphic script. Evidence that application in the schoolroom might well have contributed to this most longstanding of printing firms.

## Chipping Campden Literature Festival:

Tuesday 30 April 9:30am-3:30pm in the Town Hall:  
Jonathan Korejko gives step-by-step guidance as participants explore the joy of creating handmade paper from a variety of ingredients.

Friday 3 May 11:00am in the Library: Will Hill's talk on the history and importance of typography.

Saturday 4 May 10:00am-4:00pm in the Town Hall:  
**Louisa Hare** and other printers hold a sale of rare and irresistible work, including books, posters, cards, bookplates, wood engravings, antiquarian fine press volumes, letter press equipment and papers.

## Cossar Press:

This has been dismantled, moved and is now being re-assembled. If you can stand the internet you may like to see these pictures:

[scottishprintarchive.org/pictures-rebuild-process/](http://scottishprintarchive.org/pictures-rebuild-process/)

## From the Chairman:

We were sad to learn of the death of Guild Member Jon Blok of Moreton in Marsh. We offer our condolences to his wife and family.

At our last meeting Paul Davies arrived with a portable guillotine which he magnanimously donated to the Guild. This was immediately sold to a member and £20 went into our coffers. Thank you Paul.



### FOR SALE: Tabletop Albion Press Mfr. Frederick Ullmer, London, 1888

The press is in excellent condition, restored as it was in 1987, by Chris Holladay, Modbury Engineering, a noted expert. Since that date the press has not been used and remains complete in every respect. The press is mounted on a triangular, wooden 'plinth', as shown. The platen size is 10 x 8". Price £4,000 + shipping.

Enquiries please contact:  
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