



OXFORD GUILD OF PRINTERS NEWSLETTER

May 2018

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MEETING RECALL: NICK HAND

'Repetitive and difficult': I refer not to Nick Hand's talk but to the similarities in the two constants of his life; those being cycling and letterpress. He alluded to 'an alliance' between the two, but did not elaborate. Quite a lot during the evening was left unsaid. This is because this youthful fellow (his appearance belies the fact that he was at University during the 70's), is refreshingly modest.

The slides were a good and varied mix. Opening appropriately enough with *First Things First*, a manifesto signed by 60's graphic artists, expressing a need to eschew the trivial, followed by a letter from Virginia Woolf printed at the Hogarth Press, outlining her aim to print 'works of merit'. Not just a gimmick-man this then, and not to be renowned only for making marathon journeys with a press on the back of his bicycle.

Nick cycled around the British Isles in 1989 without a press. This trip included going round the coast of Ireland too. Five months and 6,000 miles or more later he had collected 130 sound slides of craftspeople. A lonely spell. Anybody from saddlers to spinners, from letter cutters to leather workers, became 'his best friend for the day'.

It was during this journey that the idea for the Bristol Letterpress Collective was spawned. This is a productive, well-equipped letterpress workshop publishing well-designed work with commissioned artists and it employs one full time printer. It is in the centre of Bristol.

Two other significant tours with the bike were to follow. In the same street as the Collective resides a bicycle maker and so a customised bike with a fold down container-table was built. There was a Kickstarter fundraiser for a journey to Mainz; printing and sending artist illustrated post cards along the way to donors. The rigours of printing as the damp rises in the evening after a day's cycling, only after a shower and much needed sustenance. Nick was very sanguine about the lack of a welcome at Mainz. Alas, all the printers were off attending an event. Far from being welcomed at the Town Hall, his bicycle was removed from the premises.

Last year saw the trip from Land's End to John o'Groats, stopping at towns famous for particular industries. Northampton for boots, Hebdon Bridge for trousers, Stratford on Avon the Shakespeare extravaganza, for example. Nick is also a good photographer and a book resulted.

There was time at the end to view some excellent work from the Bristol Collective. This included large posters and some collaborative work with Pat Randle; all richly illustrated.

Far from being repetitive and difficult, the evening with Nick Hand was fresh and inspiring.

Louisa Hare

GUILD MEETINGS

Please check the latest *Newsletter* for meeting locations, as these are liable to change at short notice. The next couple of meetings will be at The Bull in Charlbury; at 7:30 for 8:00pm.

Monday 4 June: Ian Beck: The Photographs of Janet Stone.

Monday 2 July: Alan Brignull: Adanaland.

Sunday 5 August: Picnic hosted by Ann and Tony Lloyd at the Royal Oak Press, Charlbury, from noon onwards.

Monday 3 September : Robin Phillips: The Curwen Press.

Saturday 3 November: Wayzgoose at Oxford Brookes University, from 10:00am to 5:00pm.

TYPECASES WANTED

The Bodleian Library in Oxford has very generously been given a large collection of wood type by Stephen Austin and Sons, Printers. This has been expertly catalogued by Paul Nash and is currently neatly stored in cardboard boxes. We want to get the type into conventional 'blank' typecases. This is a call to anyone with spare blank cases in reach of Oxford. You can be assured that once in the Bodleian, that is where they will stay forever making this great collection accessible. Please contact Richard Lawrence by email: zrlawrence@aol.com

APOLOGIES

In the May *Newsletter* the editor stated that member Peter White had drawn our attention to a piece about competitive type-setting in *The Economist* when in fact it was Peter Wilson. Sorry! Editor

NOTES FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Bristol Letterpress Collective: Four of your Committee attended the last meeting to hear Nick Hand talk of his cycling and printing exploits. He also told of his efforts to preserve both the skills and the machinery for letterpress printing at the Bristol Letterpress Collective. He spoke with enthusiasm and showed such clarity of purpose that we have been minded to offer a grant of £500 to further his efforts. Elsewhere Nick describes more specifically his aims.

Ephemera on Show and List of Members: By the time you get this Newsletter you should have received both the 'List of Members' and the 'Ephemera on Show' bundle. I tender my thanks to both Jane Russ and Mick Toole who have undertaken the collation of the ephemera pieces and to all of you who have contributed. Our continued condolences to Margaret Condon with her broken leg who had so enthusiastically volunteered to take over from Peter White. I hope the newly designed List of Members meets with approval.

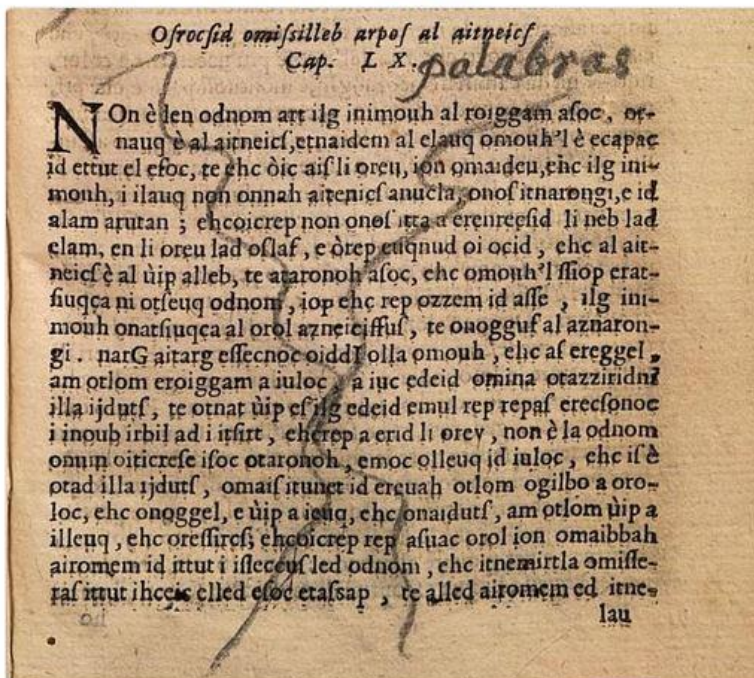
NOTE FROM NICK HAND

The Letterpress Collective is based in the centre of Bristol. It is a not-for-profit Community Interest Company that aims to protect and use presses, type and letterpress equipment in the city. The collective is based in an artists cooperative in the Old City, an area that was once home to 30 letterpress companies (around the beginning of the 1900s). We also run regular workshops to teach people basic letterpress skills. The Letterpress Collective employs a full time young printer, Ellen Bills who is learning her craft from older letterpress printers in the city and beyond. We are very grateful for the donation from the Oxford Guild of Printers and the donation will be given to Ellen as a travel bursary to learn new printing skills as she helps develop personally and as part of the collective.



Shanti Graheli @shantigraveli · May 30

When things go seriously wrong in the #printshop. Some inexperienced compositor type-set this section of Fioravanti's *Capricci medicinali* the other way round. [Copy: Lyon BM, 342276, p. 381]. @BibLyon



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RANDOM OFFERED

Richard Lawrence (email overleaf) has a double random-top metal composing frame which is in need of a good home. It has space for 2 x 20 cases with a sloping top to accommodate two pairs of uppercase and lowercase. It is offered free to a good home, with free delivery within reason.

BLOG POSTS

Some recent blog posts caught the eye of the editor:

Enid Marx at the House of Illustration: inclinepress.com

Trindles and edge-trimming: greensbooks.co.uk

Binding the Kelmscott Chaucer: han-made-bookbinding.tumblr.com

PRESSING ON: THE LETTERPRESS FILM

Those who missed out on supporting the Kickstarter project for *Pressing on: the letterpress film* might be interested to know that the film will be released to the public on the 19th of June 2018. A digital download can be pre-ordered from iTunes already, but it will also be available from Google Play. Physical copies will be on sale on the same day; ask your favourite local book- or DVD-store for details. For more information, and to watch the trailer, see the website: www.letterpressfilm.com

INEXPERIENCED COMPOSITOR?

A recent conversation on twitter hinged on the likelihood that the text, opposite, was the result of an inexperienced compositor or a deliberate 'mistake'. Comments on a postcard.

NEW BOOKS

Please report any newly printed books to the Committee so that they can be added to our website.