PRIVATE LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION AFFAIRS

The eleventh Annual General Meeting was held by courtesy of the Library Association at their premises in Ridgemount Street, London, on the 11th April. We are most grateful to Sir Arthur Elton for his most entertaining, extemporaneous talk on his collection of Railway Books and Prints, and for his generosity in allowing members to handle some fine examples from it.

The A.G.M. followed, and reports from the Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer having been received, there was considerable discussion of the proposed increase in subscriptions for 1968. It was explained that most of the increase would be used to double the size of the Journal, and that the greater funds available would also enable the Association to finance more and better separate publications. These latter would sometimes be issued free to members, and would sometimes be issued on a subscription basis; in either case copies would be sold to non-members at economic prices, eventually making separate publications self-supporting. Extracts were read from letters from country members who were opposed to the increase. Several members held the Journal to be of little value, and thought the Exchange List to be the more vital part of the Association's work; others objected to the proposed expansion of the publishing programme; and yet others complained of a bias towards the physical aspects of book collecting, alleging that the controlling clique were not interested in the content of their books. On a vote being taken among the twenty or so members present, however, all but one were in favour of the Council's proposals for next year.

Guy Powell was thanked for his work as Hon. Treasurer over the past three years. Group Captain Pratt, our Hon. Membership Secretary,
was elected in his stead, and will serve the Association in this dual capacity in future.

Thanks were also expressed to Mr Feather, our Hon. Auditor, and to Mr Broome and Miss Hardy who respectively prepare and distribute the Exchange List—both most onerous tasks.

**RECENT PUBLICATIONS**

The Council of the Association is grateful to Mr E. J. O'Dwyer for his work in preparing the essay on Thomas Frognall Dibdin which has recently been distributed to members. This is a more substantial volume than PLA has hitherto published, and serves as the free publication for 1966 and 1967. Its elegant dress is due to the care expended on it by Iain Bain, to whom the Council's thanks are also due. Additional copies if required may be bought by members for £5.00 or $2.50. To non-members the price is £10.00 or $4.50.

As neither of the editors was concerned in any way with the production of the book, we wondered whether we should review it as a matter of policy that we should not do so. We believe that most members will agree with us in finding it interesting and useful, and not with the member we are told complained that he had been sent a book he did not want about a man he hadn't heard of...

A number of other books have recently appeared with which the Association is in a sense connected, although it was in no way concerned in their publication. The Honorary Membership Secretary, R. D. Pratt—whose article on collecting books about books members will remember in a recent issue—has drawn on his extensive collection to compile his *1000 books about books*. As with any personal selection, there are some omissions and some inclusions on which we would differ, and it would have been an asset had Mr Pratt had room for more annotations. On Rogers' *Manual of bibliography* (1891) for example; those readers who like us enjoy browsing through early volumes of *The Library* may recollect the ferocious attack made on it as 'Bibliography as she is wrote'. Mr Pratt's selection, well printed for him by John Mountford at the Merrythought Press, will be useful to all interested in the literature of book production and collecting.

From another member, James Ollé, comes *Library history*. Published by Clive Bingley Ltd at £5.00, his short guide to the literature of the history of libraries though closely geared to the needs of those studying to become professional librarians contains a good deal of background material of interest to the amateur.

Through the good offices of another PLA member our attention has been drawn to a history and bibliography of *The Tullis Press, Cupar, 1803-1849* by D. W. Doughty which has been published by the Abertay Historical Society. It is a well printed and amply illustrated little book, which presents an interesting and informative study of the firm which was at one time the printer, officially or quasi-officially, to the University of St Andrews and is the direct ancestor of the modern firm of papermakers Tullis Russell. Copies, reasonably priced at £10.00, may be obtained from Abertay's Publications Secretary, Mr C. J. Davey, Department of History, Queens College, Dundee.

**SILVER JUBILEE**

It comes as something of a surprise to realise that Harvard's Houghton Library is already (or should one say only?) twenty-five years old. In its quarter century the library has become firmly established as one of the most important of rare book collections. This has been due in the main to three men: to Arthur H. Houghton, Jr who donated books and funds for the building which was a landmark in the exploration of air conditioning, lighting etc. for the preservation of rare books; to Philip Hofer for his work in the domain of printing and graphic arts, and above all to the late lamented William A. Jackson. Few PLA members can have had the opportunity to visit the exhibition which was held to celebrate the occasion, but those who have the opportunity to see *The Houghton Library 1942-1967: a selection of books and manuscripts in Harvard collections* will be able to appreciate something of the riches of the library in such various fields as Canadiana, Erasmus, theatrical ephemera, and fine printing, to name only a very few of the areas in which the library's resources are outstanding. The catalogue, with the letterpress produced by the Stinchou Press and the 370 plates by the Meriden Gravure Co., is as one would expect a magnificent production. It is published for the Library by Harvard University Press at $50.00; a price which seems high but is in fact below the production costs as the volume was financed by a friend of the Houghton Library.

To think about the achievements in Cambridge and compare them with those in erecting the National Reference Library in London is not recommended to those who have a tendency to melancholia.
FACILIS DESCENSUS HELICONIS

We recently purchased for five shillings the Report of the Trustees of the British Museum and hasten to say that it is very good value for the money, 94 pages 10" x 7" with fifty four illustrations, some of them in colour. It covers the period since 1939 when the Museum suffered strains and distractions from which it has never recovered. It was a courageous act on the part of the Trustees, ladies and gentlemen who are all of eminence, to publish this report which admits their failure to establish an institution worthy of Great Britain. The fact seems to be that they are no match for the astute politicians and smooth civil servants who control the money which is needed to provide effective facilities. Far from the Museum being able to expand, it is smaller than it was thirty years ago.

Our main concern is with the library, and we cannot escape the conclusion that it would be better off separated from the antiquities. It would then be fighting only the government for money and not other departments for space as well. It often loses the latter battle. At three o'clock in the afternoon there is not a seat to be had in the Reading Room; we could not help comparing this, recently, with the Elgin Marbles at the same time of day, occupying a vast lofty hall with a scattering of viewers in it.

To the user the library presents a strange mixture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The outlook of the former is exemplified in the Catalogue of fifteenth century books. This reflects the view of incunabula of the Roxburghe Club in its heyday— that Italian and German books are the only really worth while ones. Publication started in 1908; sixty years later it still does not cover English books. In contrast to this we have the photolitho reprint of the General catalogue, a remarkable feat utilising the most up-to-date techniques and carried out with rapidity and to schedule. It is a pity the opportunity was not taken to delete from it the 200,000 volumes destroyed during the war. To travel from Scotland, as we once did to consult one of these, and then be informed that it has been missing for over twenty years is an exasperating experience.

Although we now have a Ministry of Technology and a Department of Science we appear to be further away from a National Reference Library of Science and Invention than if the project had never been broached. Part of this library is the old Patent Office Library housed in a delightful construction in the cast iron gothic tradition, perhaps even more appropriate to what is actually going on than the converted warehouse in Bayswater where the rest of it is thought to be. Its South Bank accommodation never existed even as a drawing.

It is a sad experience to browse through this report, admiring the illustrations of what the Nation has managed to buy and regretting that the job cannot be done properly. We are most grateful to the Trustees for publishing it and to both them and their staff for endeavouring to persevere in trying circumstances.

LIBRARY HISTORY

We have just seen the first number of a new periodical—Library history, published by the Library History Group of the Library Association. It contains an illustrated article on the Library of Edinburgh University from 1580 to 1710, which takes up most of the issue, followed by one on Hagberg Wright and the London Library. There is an interesting section of notes on recent publications relevant to library history, and some book reviews. The subscription to non-members of the Group is £1 a year for two issues.

BAXTER CENTENARY

It was late in 1866 that George Baxter was struck by a horse omnibus from which he died in 1867. Leicester City Museums commemorated the centenary of his death very enterprisingly with an exhibition of his work as a colour printer. The examples were drawn from the collection of Mr W. C. Reeves who also compiled an eleven page catalogue of this exhibition. The opportunity to see so many Baxter prints together does not often occur, which made this exhibition additionally welcome.

Book illustration was well represented with a nice copy of the Cabinet of paintings and a number of prints from Mudie's books. The diversity of Baxter's output was well illustrated, varying from very small needle box prints to quite large pictorial work. It was in the subject matter of many of the latter that we could see exemplified Baxter's desire to 'bring taste of a refined and intellectual nature to the working people'. A lot of them represent much that was worst in Victorian art and presumably would not have survived but for Baxter's name on them. The technical skill of the printing contrasts sharply with the sloppiness and sentimentality of the original pictures. The most interesting prints were the historical ones, the Great Exhibition crowded with visitors, and spirited actions in the Crimean war; an unusual portrait showed Queen Victoria looking a little haggard in 1858. Mr Reeves and the Museum are to be congratulated on an excellent exhibition.

Summer 1967
A Ballad
Upon a Wedding

I
TELL thee, Dick, where I have been,
Where the rarest things have seen;
O, things without compare!
Such sights again cannot be found
In any place on English ground,
Be it at wake or fair.

At Charing Cross, hard by the way,
Where we (thou know'st) do sell our hay,
There is a house with stairs;
And there did I see coming down
Such folk as are not in our town,
Forty at least, in pairs.

[Opening page of the Suckling; slightly reduced. The block on the cover of this issue is reproduced from the Nashe in the ‘Songs from the Dramatists’ series]

THE WALPOLE PRESS OF OLD COSTESSEY, NORWICH

by Ann Barrett

THERE have been many articles on private presses published in the Private Library. The presses which have been described range from the very small presses operated by one man as a weekend hobby to the semi-institutional undertakings such as the press run by the Nuns of Stanbrook Abbey, and the books which they produce are as varied as the reasons for their establishment. Yet readers must have noticed how the majority of them seem to have come into being in the past ten or twenty years during the current boom in amateur printing, although there is a sprinkling of presses—like those of H. G. Dixey and Count Potocki—which hark back to the activity of the interwar years. Most are however of comparatively recent foundation, and it is therefore as pleasant as it is surprising to find a press still at work which was founded before the first world war; a press which for all I know may be the oldest still surviving. Mr Martin Kinder’s Walpole Press is very little known today outside Norwich, and seems to have escaped the notice of most private press bibliographers in the past: it is not, for example, recorded by either Ransom or Tomkinson, and the only references that I have been able to find—in The book of the private press, in the Manchester Reference Library’s Catalogue of private press books and in The Times Bookshop’s English private presses 1757-1961—are brief indeed. Yet the Walpole Press provides a direct living link with the era of Kelmscott, Doves and Ashendene, for its foundation was inspired by a visit to another of the great private presses of the time.

In 1912 Mr Kinder was visiting the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, where Nugent Monck, the founder of the Norwich Players, was producing for the Irish Players. During his stay in Ireland, he went to Dundrum, Co. Dublin, where the two sisters of W. B. Yeats had been running a press since 1902, initially as the Dun Emer Press, then, from 1908, as the Cuala Press. A large part of their output was of the poems and essays of their brother, although it also included other works, such as the poems and translations of J. M. Synge, and the ancient songs and legends of Ireland.

Mr Kinder was sufficiently impressed by the activities of the Cuala Press to consider taking up printing himself. On their return to England,
he and Nugent Monck obtained a case of fourteen point Caslon Old Face—which remained the favourite type of the Walpole Press for books throughout its history—and a Crown Folio Albion hand press, and Mr Kinder began to teach himself the techniques of printing. The 'press' thus created was named the 'St William Press' after St William of Norwich, and production began in 1913. Its early output consisted mainly of playbills, programmes and tickets for Nugent Monck's productions for the Norwich Players at the Old Music House, King Street, Norwich, but they also included a play by Nugent Monck, *The Interlude of Holly and Ivy*, based on fifteenth century sources, which had been performed by the Norwich Players in May 1911 and was printed in 1913.

After the First World War, Mr Kinder moved to Walpole House, Thorpe, near Norwich; hence the 'Walpole Press', although Mr Kinder was also influenced in his choice of name by the example of Horace Walpole. At about this time he acquired a treadle press and the stock of type faces was augmented by the addition of twelve point Caslon and gradually built up until the range of Caslon extended to seventy-two point. The range now comprises Caslon Old Face from eight point to eight line, the larger sizes being in wood and used for window bills for plays etc.; Poliphilus ten, twelve and fourteen point, with Blado italic; Centaur (a Bruce Rogers design based on that of Jenson at Venice 1470); Bologna and Nicholas Cochin, the latter two being calligraphic faces used mainly for such work as Christmas cards. The press used now is a Golding Jobber.

There was an interruption in the activities of the press for a year in 1923 when Mr Kinder moved to Peterborough, where some playbills and notices of concerts etc. were produced. By 1929 the Walpole Press had moved to Elm Hill, Norwich, and two more books had appeared. One was a work by Thomas Browne (1605-1682), *On Dreams*. As in the first book produced at the press, there was a local connection, Browne having lived in Norwich from 1636. The other book was a volume of poems by Thomas Nashe, which was intended as the first of a series of 'Songs from the Dramatists' ranging over English dramatic literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Lyrics contained in the plays of this period were available only in anthologies, outside their original context, and it was the aim of this series to 'supply in an attractive form and at a reasonable price a complete collection of a dramatist's songs, with the single exception of Shakespeare'. The volume on Thomas Nashe contained a short biographical
were not worthy of the effort.

This was followed in 1931 by a similar volume devoted to verses by Thomas Dekker, again with biographical and textual notes. Uniform volumes of verse by John Lyly and George Peele were planned but never printed. The aims behind the intended series illustrate very well Mr Kinder’s great interest in literature, especially dramatic works. One feels that he would not be content to produce merely a piece of fine printing, although this in itself is an admirable aim, if the contents were not worthy of the effort.

The next book produced at the Walpole Press was *A ballad upon a wedding* by Sir John Suckling, with three line illustrations by H. W. Tuck of the Norwich Art School. It is interesting to note that this Ballad seems to be a favourite subject for private press work, having been printed by at least two apart from the Walpole Press: James E. Masters of the High House Press, Shaftesbury, Dorset, produced it in 1925, and Robert Gibbings printed a version in 1927, with wood engravings by Eric Ravilious.

In 1932 the Walpole Press produced a pleasant little book of drawings of Norwich, again by H. W. Tuck, and printed from wood blocks.

The last book produced (1945) was *The book of Tobit*, from the Authorised Version of the Apocrypha, with four photogravure reproductions of paintings of the subject by Domenichino, Pereda, Rembrandt and an unknown artist of the School of Verrochio; which were executed by Hoods of Middlesbrough. This is the only book produced at the present home of the Walpole Press, at Old Costessey, Norwich. It is unique among the book output of the press in that the text is set in Poliphilus and Blado italic, all the others having been set in Caslon. As in the others, ligatures and the long ‘s’ have been used, to good effect, but not ‘u’ for ‘v’ as in the ‘Songs from the Dramatists’ volumes. A large proportion of the Walpole Press output, including such items as programmes, has a very pleasantly ‘antique’ flavour, owing to such touches as swash capitals to italics, rules and decorations of printers’ ornaments, and some very attractive ‘classical’ blocks. This effect is achieved without ostentation and sets off admirably the simplicity of the letterpress work.

As well as books, there was still a steady output of playbills for the Norwich Players (who in 1921 had moved to their present home at the Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich,) and for other bodies, and of many well-designed Christmas cards. These frequently used drawings and paintings of Old Masters, and copies of designs by artists as varied as Dürer and Thomas Bewick. The combination of simplicity and pleasant design in these cards is typical of the entire output of the Walpole Press.

Mr Kinder claims that the success of his playbills is due to the fact that he has always confined himself to a single typeface in any one piece of work, using only different sizes to obtain variety, and thus achieving unity. All the books are simple, even conservative, in appearance, all, except *Tobit*, being ornamented, if at all, only by black line blocks and relying for effect upon typeface, layout and the texture of the paper. Perhaps the most successful in this respect are the two volumes from ‘Songs from the Dramatists’; it is a pity that economic reasons prevented the completion of this series.

On my last visit to Mr Kinder, I found him, despite poor health, still printing, and although he now confines himself to such material as invitation cards and programmes, his enthusiasm and careful attention to detail and quality are as great now as they must have been in 1913, when the press began.

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**AN ABC FOR BOOKSELLERS**

*by John R. Hetherington*

**ABA:** American [customers] before anyone.

**AMERICA:** The most magical word that you can put in a catalogue. ‘No copy in America’ added to a catalogue entry for e.g. the L.G.O.C. Timetables for Easter 1925 is invaluable.

**AMERICAN LIST:** Always let your American customers have their catalogues long before you send them to the humble English. This is their right; no intelligent Englishman will mind in the least if he happens to find out. The others, well, what of it?

**AMERICANA:** Any book which contains the word ‘America’ on page 9 (or on any other page) should be entered under this heading.

**MRS CAUDLE’S CURTAIN LECTURES, 1856; first edition with illustrations by —.** Always put a comma after ‘edition.’ People having the real first edition (1846) will not think very much of you, but they don’t count.

**COLUMBUS:** The patron saint of the British bookseller.

*Summer 1967*
DEFECTIVE: If a customer reports a book as having a serious defect not noted in your catalogue, perhaps because your knowledge of the book is shorter than your knowledge of its 'value', tell him to send it back as you have many other orders for it... The same rule applies if he offers to retain it at a lower price.

DEPORTMENT: If you have entered the trade for mere amusement and immense profit, make it your constant endeavour to be continuously idle. Never let vulgar business draw you away from your long glass at least two hours after you are dressed, practice every elegant attitude you can think of, nod, bow, ogle, simper, and endeavour to look bewitching. Habit is second nature, so that by a long and successful practice of these accomplishments, you soon arrive to a perfection which most young fellows know the advantage of.

When absolutely obliged to serve in the shop, if a customer enters, an old prosey-fellow perhaps, and begins to converse learnedly, supposing yourself, as every Dandy of your profession ought to be, destitute of learning, look excessively sagacious, with your mouth open as though you were swallowing every word, seize seasonable intervals for exclaiming yes—oh! ah! certainly—just the very authority I was going to quote—ah! Horace does hint at that I well remember—yes—yes—ah—I was about to make the same conclusion myself—strange coincidence of idea, and so forth; taking care, by the apparent sensibility of your answers, to make the person who converses with you believe that you are as skilled in learning and reasoning as himself.

When a lady enters, show her some of the warmest books you can lay your hands on, such as Peregrine Pickle, Tom Brown, or Fanny Hill, if you have it. Point out the most tempting plates, and by the flow of your eloquence, endeavour to put the female, if she be handsome, in a delightful humour... [from Dandyism displayed, 1825].

CURIOUS: Customers are unlikely to return books on the grounds that they are not 'curious.' If a customer should take this course, however, you can always say that you do not know what he means. If he asks you what you meant, ignore him. This is a sound general rule, but an entry in a recent catalogue of a Hampshire bookseller, 'BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER. With many curious plates' is taking things a little far.

DIFFICULT: To talk of a book being 'Difficult' is genuine jargon, all right in the back office or the back bar. A word sedulously introduced into amateur writings on book collecting.

DOLLARS: When inserting prices it is still customary, though a little old-fashioned, to show the equivalents in England money. There is a risk that this will frighten the English customer.

DOLLAR DIALOGUES: If you have the 1896 edition of this, call it the First Edition. You will be in good company. Should you find yourself in possession of the 1894 edition you had better keep quiet about it, otherwise you will only make yourself conspicuous. If, further, you notice that it is illustrated by Arthur Rackham, don't believe it. He ought to have known himself that it was not his style.

IMPERFECT: An 'important' book is one in your stock that you want (a) to get rid of, and (b) at your own price.

IMPERFECT: When a customer explains and proves an error in your description of a book which he already has, thus taking some of the shine off its price, thank him. If he repeats the offence, cross his name off your mailing list.

POETICAL MISCELLANY: A vogue-phrase since c.1945, and to a lesser extent since 1935. It is believed to have magical qualities, and its reiteration all the way down the page can in some people have a
genuine hypnotic effect. The rule is that a book must have at least three sets of verses by different authors; should the work you are listing have only two sets of qualifying verses in its four hundred pages of prose you are most unfortunate. A courageous bookseller will chance his arm with 'Could almost be called a Poetical Miscellany.' Prose miscellanies are not mentioned in polite circles.

PRESS BOOKS: These are books which have been printed on presses. They are valuable and important. Most books are not press books. Their origin is obscure.

SERVICE TO BIBLIOGRAPHY: If a customer, told that a book he had ordered is sold, asks you to transmit a bibliographical enquiry, sent to you in a stamped unsealed envelope, report him to the police for importuning, malfeasance, and misprision.

SHAKESPEARE’S HOLINSHED: It is annoying to find that nearly fifty years ago the proofs were published (in Everyman’s Library, too) that the Holinshed Shakespeare read was undoubtedly the 1586 edition. If you therefore feel that you ought to stop calling the 1577 edition ‘Shakespeare’s Holinshed’ say instead that it used to be known as Shakespeare’s Holinshed. But anyway, collectors seldom read, and librarians have no time to.

WANTED: To buy a ‘wanted’ book for stock is good business. But beware of telling a customer that a certain book is ‘wanted.’ Some will even suggest that those who want it had better have it.

REVIEWS


In a review of The art nouveau book in Britain in the last issue of the Private Library R. G. spoke strongly against some of the deliberate eccentricities indulged in by publishers of coffee table books. During the first few moments that one handles John Lewis’s The twentieth century book one is overcome by a despairing feeling that here is yet another of them—a large square book, which is too clumsy to be held comfortably in one’s lap, whose pages do not lie open comfortably, filled with illustrations printed in a rather too dark monochrome or else in somewhat dubious colours, and with the text printed in an uncomfortably small size of that unlovable typeface inflicted by typefounders and typographers on the public, the fashionable ‘Univer’. Nor does the flat-backed binding in red leatherette cheer one very much. This is, undoubtedly, a member of the coffee table family, and was presumably intended as such by its author who also designed the volume. Yet as one perseveres although these feelings do not disappear one is compelled to admit that it is a very good coffee table book. Mr Lewis’s chosen subject almost coincides with that of Ruari McLean’s Modern book design (Faber, 1958) and it is interesting to compare the way the two authors have treated it. Mr Lewis is at an advantage with over six times the number of illustrations (though at six times the price) and he is therefore able frequently to let his text illustrate his pictures rather than the reverse. And, with McLean’s straightforward account already on the market he was able to concentrate his attention on particular areas of the twentieth century scene instead of attempting a more generalised survey. One or two of his omissions seem odd—one would have thought that Dutch typography would have merited some attention—but on the whole his selection of topics is good. Mr Lewis’s survey of the influence of the French edition de luxe on Anglo-American commercial work, of the illustration and design of children’s books, and of the paperback revolution is useful and well thought out, and provides an excellent counterbalance to McLean’s somewhat annalistic and perhaps over traditional approach. It is however highly compressed, Sunday supplement prose and for continuous reading has a rather staccato quality. The illustrations on closer examination are by no means as bad as one had feared. The colours still remain rather dubious, as in the reproduction of the Eragny Press title-page on page 18, and the wood-engravings in particular among the monochrome reproductions lose a great deal in reduction. A comparison of John Farleigh’s engravings for The adventures of the black girl in her search for God with the reproductions on pages 168-9 shows this very clearly. Again, the reproduction of one of David Jones’s engravings on page 164 is most unpleasant. Christopher Sandford writing in Cockalorum said that he had included two of Jones’s engravings there ‘only because I have a passionate admiration for the conceptions of this great artist. Owing to his shallow engraving of the wood, these blocks are virtually unprintable’. One must assume that Lewis’s reproduction was made from a very poor print. Elsewhere however there is no doubt that the velvety blackness of the litho printing pays off admirably in a selection of illustrations which is excellent and includes many relatively unfamiliar and exciting things. There is no bibliography, but a good index.

These comments may appear severe, and were Mr Lewis’s book not of very real interest and value one would not bother to comment. Despite the lapses in quality of reproduction and mannerisms which one is not alone in finding tawesome, The twentieth century book by today’s standards gives a good deal for one’s money.

R.C.


The opportunity has been taken in producing this new edition to enlarge the format from 9 ¼ x 6 to 9 x 6 and to reduce the number of pages by ten. This edition has an additional ten colour plates, very attractively printed, and has been revised with the assistance of Dr R. Regensburger. The range of
material covered is enormous, from the Ancient World to the fifteenth century, and includes middle eastern illumination as well as that of western Europe. Every chapter has allotted to it thirty to forty small illustrations—generally three or four manuscripts per plate.

Obviously a book of this scope cannot hope to be very original and Dr Diringer has no hesitation in quoting authors from whom any particular chapter is compiled. In fact their names appear in the text, instead of in footnotes, in a manner which does nothing for the author's prose, which is of the Ph.D. demotic variety with no pretensions to style. One cannot imagine anyone actually reading through this book; to whom it is addressed is an enigma. At one end of the scale we have such translations as Most Rich Hours: at the other incomprehensible statements such as 'The following are copies of the Sjöström: AM 227, AM 356...'. Even to a reader with some knowledge of mediaeval Icelandic literature this is baffling. There are also unexplained eccentricities in the text. Why does the manuscript cited on p. 375 open St John's Gospel 'In initio'?

It is a pity that the work was not organised as an annotated bibliography, for it is in the number of illuminations located and illustrated that its value lies. Dr Diringer has no hesitation in quoting authors from whom any particular chapter is compiled. In fact their names appear in the text, instead of in footnotes, in a manner which does nothing for the author's prose, which is of the Ph.D. demotic variety with no pretensions to style. One cannot imagine anyone actually reading through this book; to whom it is addressed is an enigma. At one end of the scale we have such translations as Most Rich Hours: at the other incomprehensible statements such as 'The following are copies of the Sjöström: AM 227, AM 356...'. Even to a reader with some knowledge of mediaeval Icelandic literature this is baffling. There are also unexplained eccentricities in the text. Why does the manuscript cited on p. 375 open St John's Gospel 'In initio'?

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Winwar (New York 1940, not 1941, edition with introduction by Lord Alfred Douglas) could have been mentioned. The sixth chapter of Jacob Epstein’s Let There be Sculpture (1940) on the tomb of Oscar Wilde would have been included by Mason. And what about the plays about Wilde; for example, the version by Noël Coward of Lady Windermere’s Fan entitled After the Ball, produced in London in 1944?

The omission of C. J. Finzi’s Oscar Wilde and his literary circle (University of California Press 1951) and the two catalogues of the Aubrey Beardsley Exhibition (Victoria and Albert Museum London 1966 and the Museum of Modern Art 1967) is disappointing; and there is not even a brief reference to Vyvyan Holland’s Son of Oscar Wilde (1934).

The price of this reprint—eight guineas—is to be regretted. As one who also publishes books by photo-litho I believe it could have been less. I am only sorry that many modest collectors and students will be unable to afford to purchase a copy and will have to rely on borrowing one from their local library. But perhaps we will now be able to obtain a copy of the original edition more easily and for less.

M.A.P.

[Missing text]

G. W.

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The Private Library


Edward Arber’s Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554–1640 was published between 1875 and 1894. It is an important, yet frustrating, book. Naturally important because the archives of the Stationers’ Company constitute the most important single source of information regarding the book trade of this country. Frustrating because of the lack of organisation of much of the evidence. In his introduction to the Transcript Arber wrote that the first edition of the Statutes and Registers of the Stationers’ Company would be ‘grateful for the first-fruits here ingathered’. This, wrote Cyprian Blagden, ‘is an understatement. Not only did he transcribe and annotate many hundreds of pages of the early records, but he dug out of the British Museum and the Public Record Office many pieces of relevant material—some printed but most in manuscript—which he incorporated (on a highly idiosyncratic plan) in the Transcript.’

The most idiosyncratic part of the plan was that the documentary evidence produced as ‘illustrative matter’ was neither in chronological order nor indexed. Sir Walter Greg concerned himself with the Stationers’ Company over many years. His transcript, with Miss Boswell, of the Records of the Court of the Stationers’ Company, 1576–1602 appeared in 1930, while Some aspects and problems of London publishing between 1550 and 1600 and Licensors for the press . . . to 1640 came at the very end of his long life. His use of Arber during this time, and especially his intensive study of it during the War, led him to compile a chronology of Arber’s illustrative documents together with supplementary ones which Sir Walter unearthed, primarily in the B.M. and the P.R.O. This it is which he called his supplement to Arber and it has now been published under this title.

The book now makes easily available, and much for the first time, a fascinating amount of detail relating to the trade. To take one particular aspect: information regarding book prices is notoriously difficult to obtain, yet it is evident from the text that under this heading of the problems of the times. Entries for the years of the late 1570s and the early 1680s stress some of the problems of monopolistic printing; especially high prices and poor workmanship. By 1614 it is being suggested that these two factors are aggravated by the excessive use of apprentice labour. In their turn printers deny having raised the price of books (1621) while a spirited document of 1583 had suggested that book prices were not excessive ‘considering the great loss that printers bear when books unsold’ came to be merely waste paper.

A faintly modern, if discordant, note was sounded in 1625. Scholarly books which had been first printed in Oxford or Cambridge were being printed abroad. They were, so the Universities alleged, ‘inferior and incorrect reprints’ and they were being imported into this country. Less likely (one hopes!) to be paralleled in modern times was the occasion in 1605 when the Archbishop of Canterbury was called upon to fix the price of a book the privilege for which had been granted at his recommendation.

Systematic reading of the book, together with related works, provides the background to the booktrade; inconsequential browsing produces endless hours of enjoyment. Scholarship and serendipity alike are served. In the Bookman’s Litany thanks are chanted endlessly to the Oxford University Press.
This book provides yet another reason why this should be so. It presents us with a book which over the whole of its 355 pages of text is check-full of detail. To this has been grafted an index of nearly 100 pages; an index which is so good as to be an early claimant for the Wheatley Medal for 1967. Terms of absolute quality are few in any language, Bristol fashion, at Lloyds, Jennings condition. To these must be added—Greg accuracy and meticulous scholarship—and this edition shows why.

ROY STOKES


The text of this new edition appears at first to be identical with the last, but a careful comparison of the two reveals a considerable number of new attributions of faces, and references to recently published work, largely based on researches at Antwerp and Oxford. Critical comment on the text of a classic such as this is hardly called for in a notice of its third edition: thirty-three years after its first appearance it remains essential reading for the student of type within the period it covers, and it is beside the point to wish that this extended into the twentieth century.

Some criticism of the illustrations would however seem to be justified. A setting in Monotype (to display Baskerville) plus 42 facsimiles has seemed very inadequate for the treatment of four and a half centuries of type design, and with the doubling of the price of this new edition we might have expected considerably more illustrations. Instead, we have to make do with what we had before, with the old blocks over-inked, and in some cases even offset onto facing pages.

The binding is fortunately much improved, a simple dark blue cloth replacing the two-tone, over-gold-blocked affair that disfigured the last edition.

D.J.C.


This, the first of a welcome series of occasional publications from the Oxford Bibliographical Society, is a handlist of the two peculiar Scottish styles of binding decoration which flourished in the eighteenth century and have become known as 'wheel' and 'herring-bone' bindings. Sommerlad points out the obvious relationship between these wheel designs and the fan bindings which were common in the continent of Europe a century earlier. The author acknowledges his debt to the section in G. D. Hobson's English Bindings in the Library of J. R. Abbey (1940), but points out that most of the bindings in the present handlist are in the Buchanan or Sibson collections and were therefore likely to have been unknown to Mr Hobson as they came to the Bodleian after the publication of that book. This therefore is an extension of Mr Hobson's book and in this respect it is interesting and useful to have these additions. It is intended, as Mr Sommerlad points out, to be nothing more than a handy guide, and it is certainly this.

R.G.

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RECENT PRIVATE PRESS BOOKS

The bequeathing of the Doves types, excerpts from the Journals of Thomas James Cobden-Sanderson, 1879-1922. (Pp. 17, 63 x 44 inches. Quarter cloth with marbled paper boards. 100 copies, price U.S. $5.00. Magpie Press, 2418 Sonoma Street, Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A.) A series of some of the most interesting passages in which C.-S. described how he destroyed the famous Doves type which should have descended to his erstwhile partner Emery Walker, very well printed under difficult conditions by Margaret Taylor in Honolulu and Roberta Nixon in Santa Monica, California, using Bembo and Narrow Benbo.


El Toro and other poems by Helena Turunen, with six drawings by George R. McDonagh. (Pp. 72, 9 x 51 inches. Fabroleen boards. 48 copies price $15.00. Roger Asham Press, 87 Ridge Drive, Toronto 7, Canada.) Well printed and illustrated; spoiled by a rather clumsy binding in yellow Fabroleen blocked rather too heavily in terracotta.


Experiments with the Bradley Ornament, arrangements by Leonard Bahr, with quotations from the writings of Frederic Warde and other typographers. (Pp. 16, 94 x 69 inches. Black paper wrappers. 473 numbered copies, price U.S. $10.00. Adagio Press, 19972 Lochmoor Drive, Harper Woods, Michigan, U.S.A.) The ornaments, designed by Bradley in 1952, are displayed in various colours and many combinations which took some 41 press runs to print.

Printed on four colours of Italian Fabriano paper. Immaculate presswork. The Myths of California Isle, by Frank J. Thomas. (Pp. 45, 21 x 2 inches. Quarter linen with French paper boards. 200 numbered copies, price U.S. $10.00. Ten Fingers Press, 2371 Cheremoya Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90028, U.S.A.) A miniature book printed on damped Rives paper in Bembo, Narrow Benbo and Centaur. Tipped-in frontispiece map and several miniature illustrations. The type is really a little too large for the page, and the paper a little too thick, but nevertheless this is a pleasant chunky book, and has the merit of an original and interesting text in the bargain.

Summer 1967
A Babylonian anthology, translated from Akkadian by William White Jr., with twelve line illustrations; mostly in three colours. (Pp. 84, 10½ × 8 inches. Quarto bound in niger morocco with cloth covered boards. 200 copies, of which 150 for sale at U.S. $60.00. Bird and Bull Press, 321 Elm Avenue, North Hills, Pennsylvania 15238, U.S.A.) A press book in the grand tradition. The 3500 sheets of paper took the printer twenty-two weekends to make, and the printing, begun in August 1965 was finished early in the following year. All copies were sewn at the press, but only 66 were finished by the printer, the remainder going to Sangorski and Sutcliffe. The early difficulties experienced both in paper making and printing have all been triumphantly overcome in this, the fifth book from the press. The texts translated include The Epic of Gilgamesh, The Descent of Ishtar, The Lament of the Righteous Sufferer, and extensive selections from historical and legal documents, cuneiform correspondence and other commonplace pieces of the period.


A story, by Vic Atkins, with four illustrations by Pete Harper. (Pp. 10, 4 × 4½ inches. Paper covers. 100 copies, of which 30 for sale, price 8s. Black Knight Press, 39 Connaught Street, Leicester, England.) A gruesome new legend; a very slight piece of printing, but very well done.

Till the Leaves Come, by Vic Atkins. With four wood-engravings by Jean Cecil and two line-block reproductions of leaf prints by Duine Campbell. (18 leaves, printed on one side only, folded at fore-edges, 62 × 4 inches. Natural canvas boards. 70 copies, of which 40 for sale, price £1 1s. Black Knight Press.) Poems and essays inspired by the author's experiences as a road-sweeper. Coarse wood-engravings. Printed on Barcham Green's Bodleian paper; side-stitched, with apple-green Japanese end-papers.

Twenty five poems, by Brian Waters. (Pp. 27, 91 × 6½ inches. Stapled into paper wrappers. 150 copies; 65 for members of the Society of Private Printers, £5 for sale at 18s. The Martlet Press, Hutton House, Suffolk Place, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England.) Simple typography, nicely printed. Most of the poems are here printed for the first time, though written between 1925 and 1957.


Eleven engravings by Edward Calvert, with a prefatory note by Raymond Lister. (Pp. 7 + 11 plates, 11 × 8½ inches. Quarto cloth. 225 copies, price £3 1s. Golden Head Press, 513 Coldham's Lane, Cambridge, England.) Calvert's plates, executed between 1827 and 1831, are reproduced by colotype from the set issued in 1904 by Carfax and Co. Ltd.


Passing Scene, eighteen images of Southern Africa, by Rupert Shepherd. (Pp. 11 + 18 prints, 15 × 11½ inches. Orange buckram, printed with a two-colour design by the illustrator. 220 copies, of which 170 for sale, price £18.18s. Stourton Press, 39 New Broad Street, London EC2, England.) Founded in 1931, the press moved to Cape Town in 1949, and has printed two books since its return to London in 1961. The first was a magnificent portfolio of reproductions of paintings by Harold Gilman and Charles Ginner. This new book has eighteen perfectly printed multi-colour lino cuts, many of which were originally issued in South Africa in small editions at right to twelve guineas a print. Gathered together in a book they make a most impressive showing. Prelims and notes are set in Aries, designed for the press in the thirties. Bound in full buckram, one could have wished that the boards were rather stouter, but this is the only possible fault in an otherwise exceptionally fine production.

Nine poems, by Robert Burlingham, with woodcuts by George Bachman. (Pp. 19, 8½ × 6 inches. Full cloth. 75 copies, price U.S. $3.00. Cibola Press, P.O. Box 238, Wheat Ridge, Colorado, U.S.A.) The first book from this press, well printed on Rice's paper in Contour and Arrighi types, and with a splendid abstract woodcut by the owner of the press exploiting the grain of the wood to the full. Slightly spoiled by the choice of the red leatherette cloth for the binding, but an excellent foretaste of the press's work.

The dream of the Rod. (Pp. 25, 10 × 8 inches. Quarter calf with Taiten paper boards. 130 copies, price U.S. $20.00. St. Teresa's Press, Carmelite Monastery, Flemington, N.J., U.S.A.) The second substantial work from the Carmelite Nuns of Flemington, well printed in Solenia type and with many initials illuminated in the manner of the Book of Kells. An interesting and successful essay in an unusual form, marred only by the unsatisfactory quality of the binding leather. Inspired by the work of the Stanbrook Abbey Press, St Teresa's Press has here moved very far from the close imitation of the Stanbrook style evident in their earlier book The Prince of Peace.

Equality of opportunity and discrimination, by Dwight Agner. With a lino cut by Margaret Agner. (Pp. 166, 7 × 4½ inches. Sewn into paper covers. 110 copies, price U.S. $1.00. Press of the Nightowl, 317 Algoma Drive, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.) A thoughtful comment on some of the features of racialism, very well printed in the little seen De Roos Roman. An unpretentious production, carefully designed and well executed.


briefs: poems by Tram Combs. With seven drawings by Dorothy Clark. (Pp. 83, 24 × 14. Full cloth. 425 copies, price U.S. $4.50. Both books published by the Hillside Press, P.O. Box 264, Franklin, New Hampshire, U.S.A.) Two further volumes in the by now familiar Hillside miniature format, as usual well executed. For the present writer Tram Combs's poems with their strong West Indian interest make briefs the most successful of Hillside books so far published.
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