

NewSPRAT

Newsletter of the Scottish Printing Archival Trust
Issue No 3

Capital Plans Print Museum

It is understood that Edinburgh District Council's Recreation Committee has approved – in principle – the concept of a Museum of Edinburgh which is expected to include the story of its printing and book production past.

The craft would be represented by a special display and demonstration of printing which came to Edinburgh in the early years of the 16th Century and employed, at one time, thousands of people particularly in the major book houses – R. & R. Clark, Thomas Nelson, Neill & Co., Morrison & Gibb, T. & A. Constable, J. & J. Gray, Darien Press, Oliver & Boyd and others.

The new museum would not, it is stressed by Herbert Coutts, head of the council's museums and galleries, be in conflict with The People's Story museum housed in the Canongate Tolbooth, opposite to Huntly House and the newly acquired Acheson House which, when combined, are expected to house the new museum. The two buildings will be connected by either a section of abutting wall knocked through or, possibly, by a glazed bridge.

It is understood that if the District Council approves the plan, which it is argued would markedly enhance Edinburgh's reputation as a major centre for cultural tourism, it is expected to authorise an application for up to 50% of costs to the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

This project is, of course, separate from and additional to the new Museum of Scotland creation in Edinburgh's Chambers Street which may also house examples of our printing heritage.

Museum Moves

Speedspools' Harry McIntosh is understood to have been in negotiation with Herbert Coutts, head of Edinburgh District Council's museums and galleries, regarding the possibility of their purchasing some of his equipment for inclusion in a printing workshop in the envisaged Museum of Edinburgh to be housed in a newly created complex consisting of Huntly House and Acheson House, in Edinburgh's Canongate. (See separate article on this page.)

While financial and retiral constraints might force him to sell some or all of his plant, he is keen to see it installed as part of the 'living museum of letterpress book printing, situated ideally in Edinburgh's Old Town which, with other equipment and archives relating to Scotland's printing history, could represent the

ultimate in printing techniques over nearly 500 years'.

The Trust which has striven since its inception to persuade institutions, local government and others of the importance to our heritage of a printing archive by various means, welcomes this move which will benefit tourism, media, education and the general public.

Kirkwood Family

SPRAT has facilitated the proposed publication of a book on this family who were noted engravers in Edinburgh in the 19th Century. It is hoped to commence production at the end of 1995 through the auspices of Napier University's Merchiston Publishing arm with whom the author, Peter Symes, of Curtin, Australia, will liaise.



Napier hosts book launch

The publication of the second volume in the series 'A Reputation for Excellence' conjointly with Merchiston Publishing was recognised at a small ceremony followed by lunch at Napier University's Colinton Road premises, Edinburgh, on Wednesday, 8 March 1995. The event was held courtesy of the University and attended by representatives of Merchiston Publishing, SPRAT, Napier students, print and publishing organisations and individuals. Ian M. Campbell, Head of the Department of Print Media, Publishing and Communication welcomed those present and effected the actual 'launch' while Robert Thomson, Chairman of SPRAT, replied on behalf of the Trust and the others

The Clark Collection

The Edward Clark Collection is housed within Napier University Library, Edinburgh, and consists of approximately 4,500 items illustrating the development of printing and book production from the fifteenth century to the present day. It contains examples of book illustration and decoration, typefaces and fine bindings. It also incorporates a unique and personal collection of books used by the calligrapher Edward Johnston, and a collection of private press books from the library of the late Bernard H. Newdigate of the Shakespeare Head Press, acquired in 1966.

The Collection has its origins in the Will of Edward Clark, Chairman and Managing Director of R. & R. Clark Ltd of Edinburgh. When Clark died in 1926 his Will endowed a printing school in Edinburgh and instructed that the income from a capital sum of £10,000 should be spent on "furthering the teaching of typography" under the auspices of the then Heriot-Watt College.

In accordance with the wishes of Clark's Trustees, William Maxwell, manager of the income from the Trust, began collecting books in 1931. He collected books which demonstrated the development of typefaces and the history of typography, books which showed how the printing of illustrations developed, books with fine bindings and examples of the work of the private presses since 1880. Of particular interest are the incunabula of the fifteenth century, works from



THE OLD BOWHEAD was the familiar name given to the exceptionally quaint group of buildings which marked the junction of the ancient thoroughfare with the Lawnmarket.

Nothing in the Old Town was more picturesque or more characteristic than this group. It was one of the principal landmarks of Old Edinburgh, and for many years after the main part of the ancient thoroughfare had perished, the Bowhead still survived—a memento of old times and conditions which had passed away.

It cannot be estimated as less than a calamity that these venerable tenements, which had weathered the storms of centuries, were wantonly demolished in 1878 by the vandalistic action of the then existing civic authorities. Not many cities have suffered more than Edinburgh from this cause, and unless our citizens can be awakened to a jealous care in preserving the few relics which still remain, the Old Town of Edinburgh will speedily become nothing more than a memory and a name.

It may be worthy of record that the world-famed Publishing House of T. Nelson & Sons had its origin in the old timber-framed house at the corner of the West Bow.



Aldus, Baskerville, Bodoni, Caslon, Caxton and Plantin, and copies of William Morris's Kelmscott Chaucer, the Doves Bible and the great Oxford Lectern Bible designed by Bruce Rogers.

In 1964 the Printing School at Heriot-Watt College was transferred to the newly founded Napier Technical College (now Napier University) and the Edward Clark Collection transferred to the custody of the Librarian. Since then the Collection has been housed within the University's Library.

The principal object in building the Collection was to provide students of printing with some of the finest examples of the printer's art and to support teaching in the Printing Department of Heriot-Watt College and, after 1964, in the Department of

Print Media, Publishing and Communication at Napier College. Most of the Collection was assembled between 1931 and 1950 when it was still possible to buy second-hand books at reasonable prices. Now the growth of the Collection and the passage of time have transformed it into something greater than its initial role: though established to support teaching, it is really an important research collection.

At present, access to the Collection is restricted, largely because of its physical location and condition, but also because its existence is not widely known. Recent exhibitions featuring a typical cross-section of items from the Collection generated considerable interest and there are several visits annually by those few scholars who have access to the Collection's printed catalogue.

Most of the material in the Collection is listed in the printed catalogue, though a growing amount of material remains uncatalogued: this includes books, periodicals, woodblocks, photographs, and glass transparencies demonstrating the development of the art of the book.

Concern has been expressed by the Library authorities over the need to conserve suitably this valuable collection and it is understood that the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) have made a substantial grant award to Napier University which will enable it to undertake the necessary conservation and cataloguing.

PARERGA
ARTVRI IONSTONI
SCOTI,
MEDICI REGII.



ABERDONIAE,
EXCUDERAT EDWARDUS RABANUS.

ΘΕΟΦΡΑΣΤΟΥ
ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡΕΣ
ΗΘΙΚΩΝ
ΤΗΣ ΘΕΟΦΡΑΣΤΟΥ
ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡΕΣ

ETHICI:
EX RECEPTIONE
PETRI NEEDHAM,
CUM VERSIONE LATINA
ISAACI CASABONI.

GLASGVAE:
IN AEDIBUS ACADEMICIS
Excudit BERNARDUS FRONZ, Academicus

DID YOU KNOW . . . ?

that it was Andro Hart of Edinburgh who printed John Napier's book on logarithms in 1614 and reprinted it again in 1619.

that the first press in Perth was operated by an English printer with Jacobite sympathies, one Robert Freebairn. After participating in a failed attempt to capture Edinburgh Castle, Freebairn fled to Perth. The products of the press included an account of the Battle of Sheriffmuir.

that Robert Drummond, who published a condemnation of the atrocities which took place after Culloden, had his works publicly burned in the streets of Edinburgh. He was forced to stand by wearing a poster which read "For printing and publishing a false, scandalous, and defamatory libel." He was banished from the city for one year.

that the most accomplished printing contemporary of the Foulis brothers in Glasgow was Robert Urie. In 1750 he produced what are probably his finest works, a Greek New Testament and an edition of *Buchanan's Psalms*.

that Oliver & Boyd moved from various buildings around the High Street in Edinburgh to premises in Tweeddale Court in 1820. By 1836 they were the first firm in the city to combine printing, bookbinding, and publishing on a large scale within a single building.

that James Chalmers is renowned as the designer of the first adhesive stamp in 1834 and introduced the first lithographic works to Dundee in 1829.

that the "Number" trade, taken over from the Brownlies, became a major part of the work at Blackies during its early years. Books in paperboard sections called "Numbers" were sold by subscription and made available section by section to subscribers.

that during his stationery apprenticeship with William Kidd of Dundee, George Harley had the task of opening soaked letters washed ashore at the

wrecked train after the Tay Bridge Disaster of 1879. He founded his own company, Harley & Cox, in 1893.

that there was a Bible Printing Factory in Coldstream owned by the Rev. Adam Thomson, one of the first in Scotland after the abolition of the bible printing monopoly.

Retiral of Ian Campbell

It is understood that Ian M. Campbell, Head of the Department of Print Media, Publishing and Communication at Napier University (formerly Napier College and Napier Polytechnic) is taking early retiral from his post in October this year. Ian, who is also a member of the Scottish Printing Archival Trust, has over the years, seen, considerable changes in the set-up at Napier which has resulted in the coming together of the elements of print production, publishing and communication, including journalism, into one department. His predecessor, Richard Honour, presided over what was the printing department at Napier at a time when the numbers of print apprentices were still very significant.

Forthcoming Publication

The third booklet in the series "A Reputation for Excellence" is now in production and publication is planned for early 1996. It deals with the history of the Dundee and Perth printing industries which, in the case of the former, began around 1547 when John Scot set up the first press in the town. As stated in previous column, printing began in Perth in 1715 with the arrival there of Robert Freebairn.

From those early beginnings this illustrated booklet contains a wealth of detail which should prove as interesting as the two earlier books in this series.

Edinburgh Typographia

The Trust was given a few copies of the syllabi of this organisation by courtesy of the Edinburgh Room in the Central Edinburgh Library. These cover the period from late 1880's to

a complete sequence. Attempts to find out more about this body have been unsuccessful other than to discover that it ran until the outbreak of the 1939 war when its large library was dispersed. It did not, it would seem, attempt to revive itself after 1945.

The original syllabuses covering inception up to about 1893/4 refer to the organisation as the 'Edinburgh Branch of the British Typographia' but it later became known as the 'Edinburgh Typographia'. The Trust would be most interested to hear from anyone who has information on this group which had the support of Edinburgh Town Council. Meantime, the following extracts from the syllabuses should give readers a flavour of 'The Way We Were':

1891-2 - 'During the Session there were five lectures delivered under the auspices of the Association open to all connected with the Printing Trade. The opening lecture was given by Professor Baldwin Brown on "The Book before Printing"; followed by Mr T. A. Croal, F. S. A. Scot. "Books, Newspapers and Publishers in the Dear Days"; Mr G. D. Bishop on James Smith, Printer and Poet; Mr R. W. Henderson on "The Art of Typefounding"; while the series was concluded by Mr Robert Irvine, F.C.S., on "The Chemistry of Colour Printing."'

1894-5 - Committee's Report:

THE Committee have pleasure in submitting the Report of Session 1894-95, which is the seventh in the history of the Association, and the first under its modified and improved name of the Edinburgh Typographia. Reviewing the year's work, it is gratifying to state that it has been one of continued and encouraging prosperity.

The best guarantee of the popularity of the Association is its membership, which has again been substantially increased. On the roll there were 464 Ordinary and 30 Hon. Members—a total of 494, or an increase of 126 compared with last session.

An analysis of the membership brings out the following interesting particulars:—

	No. of Journeymen	No. of Apprentices
Compositors	197	112
Readers	35	—
Overseers	27	—
Storekeepers	2	—
Cashiers and Clerks	7	—
Machinemen	31	33
Pressmen	3	—
Stereotypers	5	8
Warehousemen	1	—
Retired Printers	3	—
	311	153

This, added together, gives a total ordinary membership of 464. Within the past three years the membership has thus more than quadrupled

Requests for assistance

Are you, or were you, involved in the printing industry? If not, perhaps someone you know is, or was, and could help us in our search for suitable artifacts, memorabilia of all kinds – particularly photographic, company histories and other material – and stories of interesting times and individuals.

Correspondence

If you feel that you can contribute to our development in any way please contact the Secretary. We welcome correspondence for a possible regular letters column in the Newsletter (Trade Unions' recollections are particularly sought).

Production of NewSPRAT

Apologies to our readers for the late arrival of the 1995 NewSPRAT. This has been due to Napier University's inability to accommodate our production requirements on this occasion.

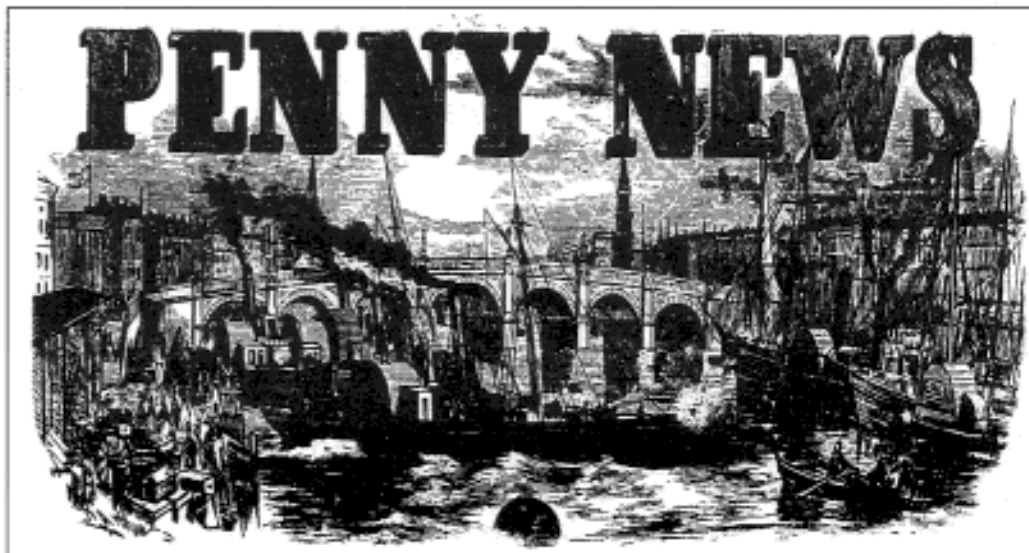
We are, in the circumstances, particularly indebted to Pillans & Wilson Ltd., the well-known Edinburgh printing company, for agreeing to supply materials and handle the production of this issue which is typeset in Clearface. The typesetting was done on a PC-based 3B2 system. The newsletter was printed on a Heidelberg 2-colour speedmaster.

For sale

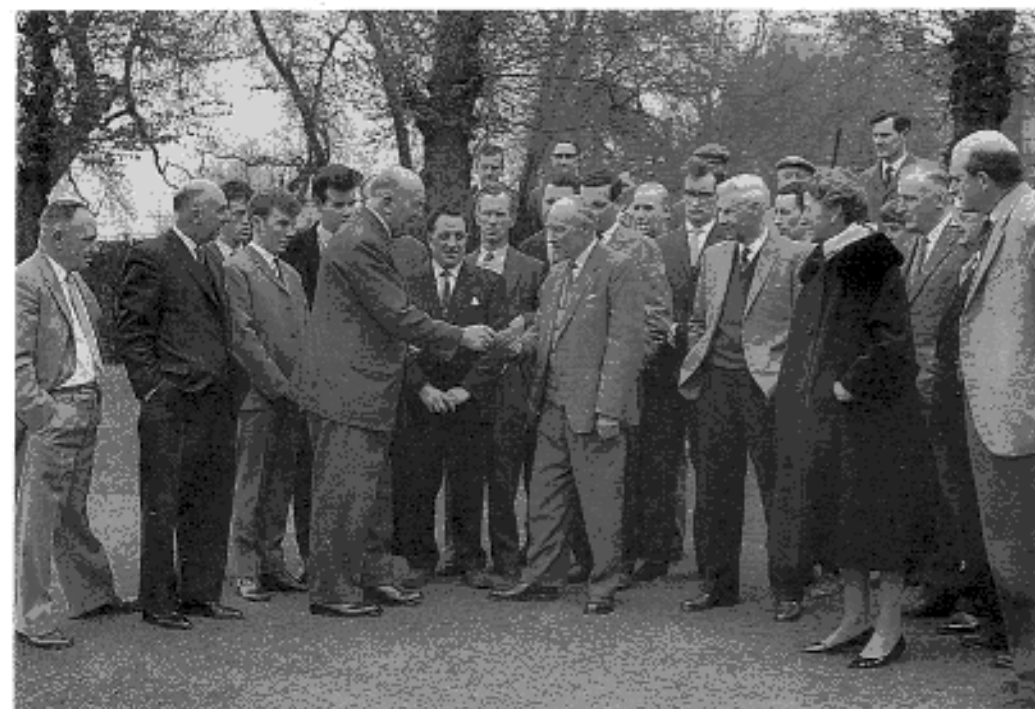
1. Illustrated booklet 'A Reputation for Excellence: a History of the Edinburgh Printing Industry'. Price £3.50 incl. post and packing.
2. Poster: Rules and Directions for Printers (1721). Price £3.50 incl. post and packing.
3. Illustrated booklet 'A Reputation for Excellence: a History of the Glasgow Printing Industry'. Price £3.50 incl. post and packing.

Contact address:

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Edinburgh EH8 7HP
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The above print was kindly provided by John Brown, late Head of the Printing Department at Duncan of Jordanstone College, Dundee. He found it – the original wood-engraving – many years



This illustration relates to a prizegiving ceremony for the members of Tanfield Bowling Club, Edinburgh (Morrison & Gibb and W. & A. K. Johnston Staff) in the late 1950's to early 1960's period. Do you recognise anyone present?

Printing museums survey

Dear Editor

The Printing House Museum is currently compiling a list of all museums in the UK which are either totally devoted to printing or have printing exhibits. We have been encouraged to do this following a similar exercise carried out by Dr Hannebutt-Benz of the Gutenberg Museum, Mainz. She has gathered together a register of printing museums in Europe and we were very pleased to be included in it. It was quite an eye opener to see just how many printing museums there are in Europe.

The Printing House is hoping to make contact with some of them so that information may be exchanged which will help us in our research into letterpress printing. So far we know 16 museums in this country, but are sure there are more. We would therefore appreciate hearing from any museums which have printing exhibits.

Yours sincerely

David Winkworth

Curator, Printing House Museum,
102 Main Street, Cockermouth.