

# NewSPRAT

Newsletter of the Scottish Printing Archival Trust  
Issue No 4

## Crieff Printing Heritage Centre

A feasibility study has been carried out by Scottish Enterprise Tayside into proposals put by David Philips Printers, Crieff, for a heritage/visitor centre based around the antique Cossar press on their premises. This machine was used weekly to print *The Strathearn Herald* from 1907 until 1991 and is believed to be one of the few remaining in existence. It was built into the premises by the designer himself, Tom Cossar, in 1907.

Associated processes would also be present and the plan would be to publish an old-style newspaper (e.g. a *Crieff Visitors Bulletin* and *What's on in Strathearn*) containing tourist and historic printing information. There might also be a display of artifacts and documents and an audio-visual display relating to the history of printing in Crieff.

The study proposals and recommendations are currently being considered and it is hoped that further information on the concept will be available by early 1997.

## Trustee Move

R. Michael Jeffrey has left his position as Secretary to the following organisations: the Scottish Print Employers Federation; Scottish Newspaper Proprietors Association; the Edinburgh Print Employers Federation. He is, however, expected to continue as Hon. Treasurer and, in a personal capacity, as a Trustee of the Scottish Printing Archival Trust.

## Dundee/Perth Book Launch

The official launch of the third title in SPRAT's series of Scottish Printing Histories was held by courtesy of Scottish and Universal Newspapers in the offices of the *Perthshire Advertiser* on 23 May 1996. The book covers the Dundee and Perth areas and is entitled *A Reputation for Excellence: A History of the Dundee and Perth Printing Industries*.

Gordon Davidson, General Manager of Scottish and Universal Newspapers, Perth, acted as host to representatives from the printing and print supply industry, SPRAT Trustees, local archival and historical

interests and print education. The printing and binding was carried out by Woods of Perth while the cover lamination was done by Celloglas. Paper was provided by Brand Paper Sales. The editing and design layout were carried out by third year BA (Hons) Publishing students from Napier University's Department of Print Media, Publishing and Communication under the aegis of Merchiston Publishing, the departmental publishing imprint. Research is already under way for the proposed next title in the series which is intended to cover Aberdeen and the North of Scotland. Coverage of the event and review of the content was given by *The Courier*, Dundee, as well as the *Perthshire Advertiser* itself.



**Dundee/Perth book launch**

During the launch of latest SPRAT publication: *A Reputation for Excellence: A History of the Dundee and Perth Printing Industries* are pictured (from the left) Jim Keppie (Secretary), John Towell (Brand Paper), Bob Thomson (Chairman), Drew Watt (Woods of Perth), Bob Ross (Celloglas) and Gordon Davidson (General Manager, Scottish and Universal Newspapers, Perth).



### HMSO in Scotland

**T**he HMSO, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, is being sold into the private sector. It is worth reflecting on how this affects print in Scotland and where in particular its printing works, known until recently as Edinburgh Press, stood in the forward march of technology.

In March, 1906, a small office was set up in George Street, Edinburgh, to specifically support and service the growing stationery and printing requirements of the then youthful Scottish Office. Local printers who could undertake the production of a large number of Reports, Command and House of Commons papers as well as forms and other printed material were required. Many of the largest book printing companies in Scotland eventually undertook production for 'the Stationery Service' as well as some small firms. As long as the company was willing to complete necessary paperwork, detailing plant etc., and become listed, any company could arrive at the HMSO's offices and ask to see all work which was available and submit tenders. Term or period contracts were normally awarded to the lowest bidder to undertake specific types of work for a period of up to five years.

**Edinburgh Press was the first Government printing works to be founded outside England**

HMSO pre-priced the contracts and gave values for the expected volumes of work, tenderers had to quote a premium above or below at which they would undertake the work. Normally, only increases for cost-of-living and a small percentage for materials would be allowed to be added during the lifetime of the contract.

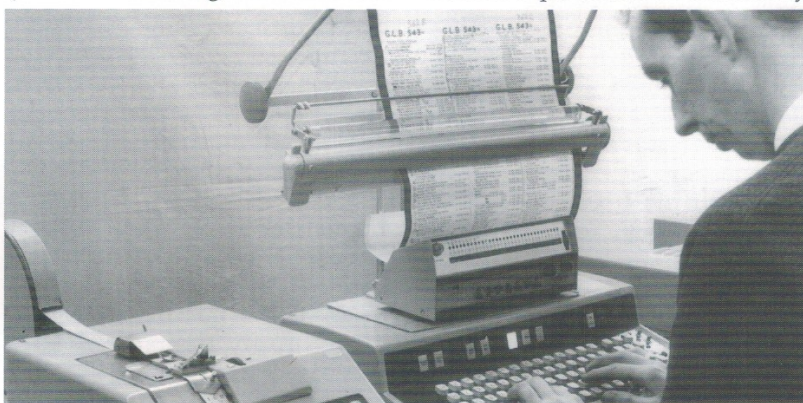
After the Second World War, the office moved to Sighthill and remained in the same building on Bankhead Avenue until a move in 1992 to purpose-built premises at South Gyle Industrial Estate. These premises brought together the print buying functions: the Edinburgh Press based in Annandale Street and the Office Supplies and Paper Warehouse Department, Bankhead

Broadway. The Bookshop, which for many years had been in George Street, then Castle Street, moved in 1987 to the old SMT car showroom in Lothian Road.

Edinburgh Press was the first Government printing works to be founded outside England and was acquired in April 1963 at a time when bookwork facilities for official printing in Scotland was going through a difficult period. This was due to the demise of many of the traditional Edinburgh and Glasgow printing establishments and the low profit margins on Government work. After a search, the old established Edinburgh company of J&J Gray Ltd (which was having some financial

booklets and pamphlets, including high quality 4-colour half-tone printing. An improved service of printing, urgently required by Government Departments in Scotland, was provided but the majority of the work was for items originating in England and for delivery south of the Border. HMSO did however have another need!

The change of telephone directories to all-figure numbering instead of named exchanges and numbers led to the first use by HMSO of computer-assisted typesetting on which they had been successfully working. As a result, eleven Purdy-Macintosh keyboards (no, not the Macs now prevalent in our Industry



*The Purdy-Macintosh keyboard*

problems) based in a purpose-built factory on the corner of Annandale and Hopetoun Streets was purchased and the staff was re-engaged.

Grays had published and printed the *Golf Monthly*, not surprising when father D. M. Mathieson was a boy's golf champion and both sons involved in the company gained golfing blues at University. Other items of note were the *NB Rubber and Boot & Shoe catalogue*, holiday brochures, the *Powderhall Greyhound Racing programme* and the programmes and posters for the King's and Lyceum Theatres. Greys also undertook part of the *Electoral Roll* as well as medical textbooks. The popular printer's 'wayzgoose' was a regular staff function along with an annual dance organised by the Social Committee.

After the take-over all printing was undertaken by the letterpress process, producing mainly books,

but a design by the late Ronald Macintosh) were installed in Edinburgh Press and the output was to punched paper tape which was, after conversion by an Elliott 903B computer, used to drive four Intertype C4 linecasters. Galleys slugs were supplied to the HMSO Press at Harrow, London, where directory production was carried out although some smaller directories were printed on the newly installed Senator and Johannisberg letterpress machines in Edinburgh Press.

The direct control of line casting machines was not new; the Teletypesetter corporation had introduced it in 1932. What was new, however, was the use of computer power for processing unjustified data (keystrokes) in a manner which could provide the necessary justified tape to drive the linecaster which had no keyboard. This was the age of the third revolution in composition as



computer power, combined with filmsetting, saw the end of hot metal. Further refinements and improvements in computer design eventually saw the establishment of a specialist Press in Gateshead utilising an ICL computer; a Linotron 505 photocomposing machine and photopolymer plates for rotary production. The Press at the time was the most modern in Europe.

The loss of this work was a blow to Edinburgh and it drifted into a period of producing any work which it could get its hands on as investment was almost non-existent. Decisions had to be made on whether to close or invest in lithography, with the latter being the option taken up in 1979. A Miles 33 '200' typesetting system was installed as a forerunner to investment in a new Parliamentary Press in London which was to have similar typesetting kit. Edinburgh Press became, yet again, an experimental station as many programmes were devised and tested to assist in the speeding up of Parliamentary printing. Heidelberg offset litho machines were installed to replace the old Senators etc. along with all the necessary camera and platemaking equipment.

In 1982 with overcapacity in the industry driving prices down, the Press again ran into financial difficulties and a decision was taken to close. After representations by a large number of Scottish Members of Parliament, of all political persuasions, an agreement was reached with the Trade Unions which saw staffing reduced by 50% and traditional bonus schemes replaced by a profitability based scheme in an effort to retain viability. Efforts by all concerned saw the Press return to profit and remain there into the present day when, once again, new technology in the form of digital printing (via Rank Xerox Document Publishing Systems) helps to provide Departments in Scotland with a first class service despite all tying arrangements having disappeared and all parties now operating on a commercial basis.

Article kindly contributed by Ian Imrie,  
Head of Print Services/HMSO

## Edinburgh Printers' Golf

The Trust has received a copy of Torphin Hill Golf Club's Centenary booklet which details the beginnings and growth of what became known as the 'Printers' Golf Course' of Edinburgh. As such, it housed the annual tournaments of the Edinburgh Printers' Golfing Society



for many years. Teams representing the major and minor printing establishments competed for the Edinburgh Establishment Federation Shield.

*The Golfer*, a local journal of that time, published a letter from A. J. Gillis, captain of the R. & R. Clark & Co. Golf Club on 13 October 1894 suggesting that a trophy be obtained for annual competition among 'Establishment' golf clubs in the city of Edinburgh and invited views. Five clubs responded – Ballantyne Press, Albert Press, Bertrams, Parkside and Wharfdale (sic).

While membership of the Federation was originally open to all Establishment clubs, it consisted almost entirely of clubs in the printing trade. One exception was the North British Rubber Co., but when that club resigned from membership in 1903 it was agreed that future membership would be restricted to clubs from the printing industry.

The first full meeting of what was to be called The Establishment Golf Club Federation was held on 17 January 1895 and was believed to be the only association of its kind connected with the game.

The 'Shield' which had not been competed for after 1920 became lost but was rediscovered in the club

house and the competition for members of the printing and allied trades was renewed, a letter having been sent out to all firms in the local Federation. At the same time, Marcus Ward, who was a director of Waddie and Co., agreed to donate a trophy in his name for the best handicap score with the 'Shield' going to the best scratch return. This tournament continued successfully until 1967 but, because of increasing membership at the club and a reluctance of members to concede use of the course at the weekends, was discontinued. Secretaries of the various printing clubs (e.g. Nelsons, R. & R. Clark, T. & A. Constable, Morrison and Gibb) then organised a similar tournament at clubs other than Torphin Hill, but this was abandoned. The 'Shield' and Cup were returned to the custody of Torphin Hill in 1977 and a team Tournament – open to all business establishment golf clubs – was then introduced.

## Napier University Changes

Dr Alistair McCleery was appointed Acting Head of the Department of Print Media, Publishing and Communication, on the retirement of Ian M. Campbell from the post in October 1995 (see item in *NewSPRAT* No. 3 of 1995), and was confirmed as Head, with professorial status, in June 1996. It is understood that his appointment will be for a fixed term, as the University has introduced the system of 'rotating Heads' in all departments.

SPRAT hopes to continue developing its ties with the Department and the University, which have provided examples of mutual co-operation in SPRAT providing, and Napier carrying out, projects (e.g. SPRAT publications and Newsletter). It is hoped to involve Napier in some oral reminiscence work and to encourage it to undertake further specialised publishing projects linked to Scotland's printing past.

SPRAT is also most interested in the control of, and accessibility to, the Edward Clark Library, which the University houses.



## Did you know...

**that** the first Scottish Edition of the authorised version of the Bible was printed in Edinburgh by Robert Young, printer to Charles I, in 1633.

**that** James Chalmers's one outstanding achievement was the founding of the *Aberdeen Journal*. The first issue was dated 29 December 1747 — 5 January 1748, and the direct descendant of this is the present-day *Press and Journal*.

**that** in 1770 George Johnston brought his press to Perth from Aberdeen. He claimed that his first publication, *Marchant's Bloody Tribunal*, was the very first book to be printed in Perth.

**that** the first trade society proper was instituted in Glasgow in 1817. Its main objective was the relief of unemployment under the 'tramping system'.

**that** Valentines of Dundee were originally connected with the weaving industry. It was only when John Valentine's company failed that he set up cutting wood blocks for another textile firm. In 1822 the firm became known as John Valentine & Son when his son James became a partner. The Partnership ended in 1840 when James ventured into printing, engraving and photography.

**that** James Whittet, printer of the *Perthshire Chronicle*, and a distinguished citizen of Perth, met his death by drowning in the South Inch Lade.

## Museums Council

SPRAT has applied for and obtained associate membership of the Scottish Museums Council (SMC). It expects to benefit from the SMC's expertise in the particular areas of Trust development, conservation and fund-raising.

## Morningside Move

Napier University's Department of Print Media, Publishing and Communication has completed its planned move from Colinton Road to its new Craighouse campus over the summer of 1996. This has involved staff in a major operation for the successful removal of all appropriate plant, machinery and equipment.

## Print Museum for Capital

*NewSPRAT's* previous issue (No. 3) indicated that the (then) Edinburgh District Council's Recreation Department had approved – in principle – the concept of a Museum of Edinburgh which would include a printing museum. This was to be housed in Acheson House in Edinburgh's Royal Mile.

It is understood that what is now called the City of Edinburgh Council's Recreation Committee has approved the proposal formally and that it will go forward for clearance by the full Council in due course after which a feasibility study would probably have to be undertaken before funding was sought.

## For sale

1. Illustrated booklet *A Reputation for Excellence: a History of the Edinburgh Printing Industry*. Price £4.00 incl. post and packing (overseas extra).

2. Poster: Rules and Directions for Printers (1721). Price £4.00 incl. post and packing (overseas extra).

3. Illustrated booklet *A Reputation for Excellence: a History of the Glasgow Printing Industry*. Price £4.00 incl. post and packing (overseas extra).

4. Illustrated booklet *A Reputation for Excellence: a History of the Dundee and Perth Printing Industries*. Price £4.00 incl. post and packing (overseas extra).

## Production of NewSPRAT

This fourth issue of the SPRAT newsletter is typeset in Palatino. The typesetting, scanning and sizing of the line illustrations was done on the Apple Macintosh system.

The newsletter was printed on a Heidelberg 2-colour GT52, on paper kindly supplied by Brand.

## Monotype History

*NewSPRAT* Issue No. 2 (of 1994) intimated that Monotype Typography Limited, formerly a division of The Monotype Corporation plc and which had been acquired by its management team in 1933, had announced its intention to publish a history of Monotype in what would be its centenary year of 1997. *NewSPRAT* understands that the principals are still trying to source funds for the writing of the manuscript and that some £ 5,000 is sought. The first installation in Edinburgh is believed to have been at Morrison and Gibb Limited in 1901 with the second at Thomas Nelson Limited in 1902. Anyone interested in donating to this project is invited to write to Andrew Boag, Monotype Typography Limited, 54 Lynmouth Road, London N16 6XL.

## 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 research for suitable artifacts, memorabilia of all kinds – particularly photographic, company histories and other material – and stories of interesting times and individuals.

## Acknowledgements

This newsletter has been produced for SPRAT by third year publishing students and staff from Napier University, Department of Print Media, Publishing and Communication, whose support is greatly appreciated by the Trust.

## Correspondence

If you feel that you can contribute to our development in any way please contact the Secretary at the address given on this page.

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