



NewSPRAT

Newsletter of the Scottish Printing Archival Trust

Issue No 6 April 1999

Memories of Parkside

The Nelson Bicentenary in 1998, referred to in the previous issue of *NewSPRAT* was recognised by a gathering of past employees at Abden House – a Nelson family residence – for recollections and refreshments on the afternoon of Tuesday 24 November, 1998. The meeting was arranged under the auspices of SPRAT and SAPPHIRE (Scottish Archive of Print and Publishing History Records) and resulted in an interesting contribution of factual and anecdotal (? also some apocryphal, *Ed.*) memories from the 20 or more representatives attending. Follow-up meetings with individuals have already taken place and more are planned. It is hoped that other major (and lesser) firms of significance may be covered in due course now that SAPPHIRE is equipped and staffed to undertake some research and oral reminiscence interviews.

Anyone with particular views or suggestions on this concept, which SPRAT has been anxious to get started for several years now, is invited to contact Dr Heather Holmes at the SAPPHIRE

Project, Napier University's PMPC Department, direct at 0131 455 6154 or SPAT's Hon. Secretary at 0131 661 3791.

Dundee Heritage Trust

Dundee Heritage Trust no longer has plans to further develop Verdant Works to cover the remaining two 'Js' of Dundee, namely Jam and Journalism. A feasibility study into the project confirmed it would not be economically viable, indeed a loss-making situation would ensue if the development went ahead within the confines of the High Mill.

Dundee Heritage Trust is now investigating alternative commercial property developments for the remaining 18,000 sq. ft. of the mill which will generate annual income to support the existing jute museum.

The collection of printing machinery remains in store at Verdant Works.

SAPPHIRE Project

This has been created with the intention of developing a substantial oral history archive and database relating to the so-

cial, economic and cultural history of the Scottish print and publishing industry during the 20th century. SPRAT is one of a number of core organisations involved in this development, the others being: Print Media, Publishing and Communications Department (PMPC) of Napier University; School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh; Scottish Publishers Association and City of Edinburgh Council Museums Division. A number of other organisations have agreed to assist the project which will also be liaising with the 4-volume *History of the Book in Scotland* (HOBS) to be published by Edinburgh University Press of which Dr David Finkelstein and Professor Alistair McCleery of the Scottish Centre of the Book (Napier University) are volume co-editors.

SAPPHIRE's co-ordinator is Dr David Finkelstein of Napier's PMPC Department supported by Dr Heather Holmes (also of Napier's PMPC Department) who is a Post Doctoral Research Fellow. The present Advisory Board consists of Helen Clark (City of Edinburgh Museums Division); Margaret Mackay (School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh

Some of those attending the inaugural meeting of former Thomas Nelson employees



University); Lorraine Fannin (Scottish Publishers Association) and Jim Keppie (Scottish Printing Archival Trust).

Grants have been forthcoming from the Carnegie, Edward Clark and Gordon Fraser Trusts and the Edinburgh Booksellers' Society. This external funding has been used to purchase the necessary initial recording and support equipment which is now in place as are the necessary administrative procedures for oral reminiscence and receipt of ephemeral material donations. Contacts have also been made with other oral history projects and liaison undertaken with interested and complementary bodies.

The first specific project involved an arranged meeting of former employees of Thomas Nelson which is covered elsewhere in this Newsletter.

A website has been set up and updated at: <http://www.pmpc.napier.ac.uk/www/sapphire/htm>

Liaison will be maintained between SPRAT and the Museums Division (Dept. of Recreation, City of Edinburgh) in regard to storage of the SPRAT Collection (see *NewSPRAT* No. 5, p. 2) of which the books, manuals and other papers may be housed at Napier University Library within the Edward Clark Collection. As such, they could become part of the record repository for the benefit of SAPPHIRE and other interested research bodies and individuals.

Museum of Scotland

The new building at the top of Edinburgh's Chamber Street housing hitherto unseen and new items pertaining specifically to Scotland's past was formally opened by Her Majesty the Queen on, appropriately enough, the 30 November, 1998 (St Andrew's Day). SPRAT had approached the Museum authorities with the offer of assistance and/or advice with

Request 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.

Printing History in the National Library of Scotland

On 29 March the National Library of Scotland re-opened the Main Reading Room back in its George IV Bridge building and with it the North Reading Room for the consultation of manuscripts, rare books and music. Some of the printed collections will be unavailable until the autumn as important fire-prevention works for the safety of the collections have still to be completed for some of the stack floors (for details see the 'news' updates on the Library's web pages, <http://www.nls.uk>). But the bulk of the older collections will be available this spring, and this is an appropriate time to remind readers of *NewSPRAT* about the resources the Library provides for those interested in the history of printing.

The National Library of Scotland may in name date only from 1925, but its history as an archive of printing reaches back to the 1680s when the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh established a library for the use of its members. From almost the very outset that library collected more than just books about law, and when the Copyright Act of 1710 was being debated in Parliament the Advocates Library (and later still the four Scottish university libraries), previously omitted from the bill, was added to the list of libraries entitled to receive books by legal deposit. Thus beginning with the first receipts in 1711, the Advocates Library built up a good collection of books printed in the UK. At the same time the advocates bought books printed on the Continent. They also acquired pre-1711 British printing, and in particular they sought to acquire the nation's own earlier printing. All this was paralleled by collection development on the manuscripts side, and the consequence was - as prominent persons began to point out in the second half of the 19th century, especially after the copyright intake increased many times over - a *de facto* national library being maintained at the private expense of the Faculty without any government support. In 1925, then, the National Library was founded and took into its care the Faculty's collections with the exception of books on or relating to law; the legal deposit privilege was also split along the same lines. Thus the National Library continued to acquire printed material by legal deposit and also purchased some, initially using only trust funds but later with a Book Purchase Fund voted by Parliament. Among older materials efforts were directed mainly towards Scottish books. Indeed the Library took over responsibility for H.G. Aldis's *List of Books Printed in Scotland before 1700*, first published by Edinburgh Bibliographical Society in 1904 and then published in a revised edition by the Library in 1970. Earlier plans for the Library to compile a sequence to Aldis to cover the 18th century were abandoned when the Library chose instead to ensure that all its holdings of 18th-century British publications were recorded in the *Eighteenth Century* (now *English* and reaching back to 1475) *Short-title Catalogue*, commonly known as *ESTC*.

Central to the study of printing history is the output of the printing presses, and there is no other library where so much of the output of Scotland's presses is preserved and available for study. Via *ESTC* (which we provide online in the North Reading Room) we can provide access to pre-1801 British material via the names of printers, publishers and booksellers, and we can supplement this with other printed source material (e.g. newspapers, printing manuals, type specimens, and the only known copy of the James Watson broadside containing printing-house rules illustrated in *NewSPRAT* 5) and much manuscript material, especially printers' and publishers' archives, the majority of which are included in A. Weedon & M. Bott, *British Book Trade Archives 1830-1939: A Location Register* (1996). There are also some *realia*, most interestingly perhaps the sample stereotype plate which William Ged presented, along with a copy of his 1739 stereotyped Sallust, to the Faculty of Advocates in 1740 in the hope of securing some financial backing.

For early Scottish printing the Library holds a largish proportion of the approximately 6,000 items known to have been printed in Scotland before 1701; and those we do not hold we have tried to acquire in surrogate form as particular opportunities arise. Recently we have carried out preliminary work on two inter-

related projects aimed at providing easier and better access to these early Scottish books. As part of the retroconversion of the General Catalogue of Printed Books we are beginning to catalogue them afresh with a view to producing a new edition of Aldis's *List* in time for the celebration of 500 years of printing in Scotland, most obviously calculated from 4 April 1508, the date of the earliest dated book printed in Scotland. At the same time we have created digital images by scanning the *Chepman & Myllar Prints*, the volume containing unique copies of the three earliest dated Scottish books and others from the same press. Our digital files are such that we can enlarge the images to many times their actual size, thereby permitting detailed and – by opening up several windows at the same time – comparative study of the types.

The Library's collections also provide material of very diverse kinds for students of later periods. One of the newer special collections of interest here is the Royal Blind School Collection, gifted in 1989. This collection is strong in pre-braille systems, notably the embossed systems devised and used by James Gall in Edinburgh and John Alston in Glasgow in the second quarter of the 19th century (for a fuller sketch see *Scottish Book Collector*, vol.3, no.10, 1993). Another unusual genre of material, which the Library has collected over many years, is that of miniature books: there are particularly good holdings of the Glasgow printer David Bryce, and a recent acquisition is Bryce's 40-volume miniature set of Shakespeare's complete works published in 1904. Also eye-catching are the rich holdings – some of them in the copyright collections, others in special collections such as Paterson and the Gregynog Press collection itself – from the Private Presses such as William Morris's Kelmscott Press.

And William Morris takes us back to early continental printing which provided him with his models. The history of early printing is much concerned with the spread of skills from one country to another, and this is obviously important for the history of Scotland's printing. An account of the history of a nation's printing would be the poorer if it were written in complete isolation from printing elsewhere, and the Library holds sufficient material from other countries to put our own printing into perspective. As already mentioned, the earliest dated Scottish printing belongs to 1508, but we can also provide earlier books from England or – more to the point since Scottish printing derived from France more than from England – from the Continent. Indeed, with about 600 incunabula going back to and including the Gutenberg Bible (not to mention a xylographic blockbook and, from Japan, a Buddhist prayer roll printed with copper blocks c. 770, to show what preceded Gutenberg), we can provide an overview of early printing as a whole, especially when this can be supplemented by the Research Publications edition of incunabula on microfiche. A more recent acquisition by the Library is the *Illustrated Incunable Short-Title Catalogue* on CD-ROM: this provides catalogue records for all books printed before 1501, and for many of them has selected images illustrating the typefaces used.

Staff in the Department of Special Collections will be happy to assist you in locating materials for your research. Please direct your enquiries to the appropriate Division within the Department, viz. the Manuscripts Division (0131 226 4531; manuscripts@nls.uk), the Rare Books Division (0131 466 2806; rarebooks@nls.uk), the Music Division (0131 226 4531; music@nls.uk), or the Map Library (0131 466 3813; maps@nls.uk). It may also be useful to consult the Library's web pages (<http://www.nls.uk>), which provide access to the Library's on-line catalogue (recently made available 24 hours a day); to a directory of special collections; to a summary index to the library's major manuscript collections and named manuscripts; to the *Scottish Book Trade Index*; and to other specialised finding-aids. A digitised version of the Chepman & Myllar prints is now available, with introductory material, on the Library's web site, as also is an online version of the earliest part (pre-1601) of Aldis's *List* (<http://www.nls.uk/catalogues/scotbooks/index.htm>) which incorporates the shelfmarks of the National Library's holdings and provides direct links to books we have digitised.

Contributed by Brian Hillyard, National Library of Scotland

items for inclusion but were advised that space limitations meant that printing and binding representation would be comparatively limited and without any reference to ancillary trades or publishing. (See also *NewSPRAT* No. 5)

SPRAT Website

It is disappointing to have to report (see previous issue of *NewSPRAT*) that progress has been stalled due to the long-term illness of the appropriate member of Napier's technical support staff. Alternative possibilities are currently being examined and it is hoped that the necessary work will be carried out without too much delay.

Machine for Sale

David Winkworth, Curator of the Printing House, 102 Main Street, Cockermouth, is willing to sell a Columbian Press, surplus to his requirements, which was made by J. Cuthbert of Glasgow and bears a name plate numbered 1. The platen size is 28 x 21 inches. He considers that, as it was made in Scotland, a Scottish museum would be the best home for it and any interested museum or other interested party is invited to contact Mr Winkworth directly at the above address or by telephone (01900 824984) or by fax (01900 823124).

Information, please ...

Jim MacKay of J. & J.S. MacKay, Printers, Publishers and Stationers, Morpeth, Northumberland has approached SPRAT (also the National Printing Heritage Trust which covers England and Wales) for information regarding the Brown Single Cylinder press which was used by his family to print the *Morpeth Herald* from 1854–1983. While we have been unable to provide Mr MacKay with the answers to his queries we have suggested possible other sources to examine. It may be, however, that a knowledgeable *NewSPRAT* reader can supply historical background on the machine which is understood to have been invented by a Mr John Brown of Kirkcaldy in the 1850s. It was located in a shed at the local flour mill and powered from the water wheel except when the river was in spate, or lacked water in the summer,

when it was turned by hand . . . 'this was heavy manual labour and it required a number of strong men to turn the wheel; but, besides the pay, there was an unlimited supply of bread and cheese, with ale *ad libitum*, to render the labour agreeable.'

Anyone able to throw light on this machine's history is invited to write or phone SPRAT's Hon. Secretary at 5 Abercorn Avenue, Edinburgh EH8 7HP (0131 661 3791).

SPRAT changes

Michael Jeffrey has, subsequent to his moving north to Aberdeen, resigned as Honorary Treasurer and Trustee of SPRAT. Campbell White, late of Hunter, & Foulis Ltd., the well-known Edinburgh bookbinders, has agreed to assume this role (but not that of Trustee) in his place and his position was confirmed at SPRAT's AGM on 1 February, 1999 as was that of Dr Sheila Lodge, Napier University's new Head of Department of the Department of Print Media, Publishing and Communications, as an *ex-officio* Trustee in succession to Professor Alistair McCleery whose tenure as Head of Department has now been completed. The trustees welcome Dr Lodge and thank Prof. McCleery for his support in the past.

SPRAT's next publication

The fourth volume in the *Reputation for Excellence* series, published conjointly by SPRAT and Merchiston Publishing, is expected to be on sale during the first half of 1999. Entitled *Aberdeen and the Northern Counties*, it attempts to provide a general history of printing firms in the North of Scotland covering Aberdeen, as the major source, but also the

other towns and areas with printing facilities north of Perth and Dundee. As such, it includes Inverness, Elgin and Forfar as well as the islands of Skye, Lewis, Orkney and Shetland and a number of other print centres. It is hoped to distribute copies for sale throughout the major Northern bookshop outlets also, possibly, museums, but interested potential purchasers can order copies for postal despatch when ready by application to Hon. Secretary, SPRAT at 5 Abercorn Avenue, Edinburgh EH8 7HP by enclosing a cheque for £5.00 to cover posting and packing.

Edinburgh Bibliographical Society

Edinburgh Bibliographical Society is pleased to announce the forthcoming publication of a major reference work:

David H.J. Schenck:

Directory of the Lithographic Printers of Scotland 1820 – 1870:

Their Locations, Periods, and a Guide to Artistic Lithographic Printers

246 x 189, 124pp (approx.), including 5pp of plates

ISBN 1 872116 29 9

The price is expected to be in the region of £18, with a substantial discount to members of Edinburgh Bibliographical Society (limited to one copy per member)

In his book David Schenck, great grandson of the lithographer Friedrich Schenck who set up the family's Edinburgh business in 1842, lists those who pioneered the art of lithographic printing in Scotland and those who contributed to the development and history of lithography in Britain. The publication is intended to provide a work of reference for, amongst others, custodians,

The Night 'Comp'

With fingers weary and worn
Eyelids heavy and red
A 'comp' stood at his frame, all night,
Picking up 'stamps' for bread.

Full point, comma, and rule,
Colon, and quad, and space,
'Setting' a line 'Pyeing' a line,
Dozing a while at his 'case'.

'Leader', and 'Latest', and 'ads',
'Nonp' and 'brevier', and all that;
Matter all solid, never a 'break';
Oh! for a trifle of fat.

One o'clock! two o'clock chimed;
'Proofs' coming up again 'read';
Three o'clock! four o'clock! daylight is here
Trudge away homeward to bed.

The Bailie 4 Sept. 1878

Submitted by Lawson Greenhill

collectors and historians of early lithographic printing.

Enquiries should be directed to the Hon. Treasurer, Edinburgh Bibliographical Society, c/o National Library of Scotland, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EW.

Piccolo Museum

This new development at Nairn was covered in Issue No. 5 of *NewSPRAT* but its founder, who houses the museum at the rear of his Piccolo Press premises at Nairn, regrets delay on availability for visitors which were caused by work pressures at his Press. These should soon be over making the museum accessible for visits of School parties and other interested bodies. An article on Mr Honnor's undertaking appeared in a recent issue of *The Scots Magazine*.

For Sale

Illustrated booklets: *A Reputation for Excellence:*

Vol 1. *A History of the Edinburgh Printing Industry*

Vol 2. *A History of the Glasgow Printing Industry*

Vol 3. *A History of the Dundee and Perth Printing Industries*

Each volume priced £5.00 incl. post and packing (overseas extra)

Poster: *Rules and Directions for Printers (1721)*

Price £5.00 incl. post and packing (overseas extra)

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Correspondence

If you feel you can contribute to our development in any way please contact the Secretary at the address given below

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