

NewSPRAT

Newsletter of the Scottish Printing Archival Trust
Issue No 8

SPRAT Trustee changes

Mr Robert Thomson, Chairman, and Mr James Keppie, Secretary, have intimated their decisions (during 2001) to retire from their SPRAT roles and the Trustees have, as a result, been active in regard to the finding of suitable replacements. This has resulted in a variety of meetings with organisations such as Napier University and SPEF, as well as with certain individuals, and we are pleased to report the following changes which took effect from the date of the Trust's AGM on 14 February, 2002:

Chairman: Mr Patrick Mark (late of Simpson Label Co.) Vice Chairman/Secretary: Mr H. Bernulf Clegg (late of George Waterston & Son).

Mr Campbell White will continue as Treasurer (but not as a Trustee) and the complete listing of Trustees will now be as follows: Patrick Mark (Chairman); H. Bernulf Clegg (Vice Chairman and Secretary); Robert Thomson; James Keppie; Peter Morrison; William Watson; Sheila Lodge (ex-officio); Helen Clark (ex officio).

The Trust's genesis arose from the Secretary's awareness, back in 1986, that an era of Scottish printing had ended with the demise of Clark-Constable which itself signified the death of the major players in the Edinburgh book printing league – Clark Constable being an amalgam of R. and R. Clark, Morrison and Gibb, T. and A. Constable, Oliver and Boyd, Thomas Nelson and Darien Press. Approaches to interested individuals (notably Mr Thomson) and others who shared the view that our printing past should be appropriately conserved resulted, initially, in the formation of a Steering Group followed by the Trust itself in 1988, the original members being: Robert Thomson (Chairman); James Keppie (Secretary); R. Michael Jeffrey (Treasurer); Ian Campbell, Napier University (ex officio); Helen Clark, Keeper of Social History, City of Edinburgh (ex officio).

The (now) past Chairman and Secretary, while willing to continue as Trustees, consider this to be a suitable time, both for personal reasons and in SPRAT's best interests, for them to demit office and they extend their best wishes to the incoming office-bearers in their efforts to carry forward the Trust's aims and objectives.

NELSON EXHIBITION: "Spreading the Printed Word: Thomas Nelson and Sons"

This took place within Edinburgh's Huntly House Museum, Canongate, Edinburgh, during August, 2001 as a consequence of the oral reminiscence work carried out through SAPPHIRE - with SPRAT participation and encouragement - to commemorate the bicentenary of the founding of the Company.

(Contributed by SAPPHIRE)

SPRAT: Who Are We ?

Final year students at Napier University's School of Communication Arts were given the Trust's 'Corporate Identity' as an examination project during 2001. Presentations took place at the Old Craighouse campus (attended by the SPRAT Secretary) with a special showing for Trustees and it is hoped to select one of the projects for possible development and use by SPRAT after adaptation.

Sapphire

Visitors to the Museum of Edinburgh, The Royal Mile, Edinburgh between August 2001 and January 2002 were able to view some of the results of research undertaken during the SAPPHIRE project. An exhibition chronicled the history of Thomas Nelson and Sons, and its links with Scotland and the world over the last two hundred years, charting its history as an international publisher and printer, examining its place in the working lives of its employees, and looking at the impact of its philanthropic activities on the social fabric of Edinburgh. As well as viewing the exhibition, visitors were also able to hear the personal reminiscences of past employees.

SAPPHIRE (the Scottish Archive of Print and Publishing History Records) is a joint initiative between Napier University and Queen Margaret University College to record the history of the Scottish publishing and printing industries. The archive, held in the Edward Clark Collection at Napier University, includes recordings of the oral reminiscence project as well as ephemeral material and can be consulted by scholars.

(Contributed by SAPPHIRE)

Scottish Print Plant

As with other Printing Heritage organisations in the U.K., we are often approached for help in the placing of old printing equipment. While we do our best to link donors with prospective new owners we are, sadly, not always successful as the few Scottish print museum facilities have very limited space. We will, however, continue to do our best to find homes for surplus print plant and other items and would encourage readers to check with our Secretary before disposing for scrap. Current items for placement are an Intertype press and a gas-fired blocking press (Patrick Ritchie, Edinburgh).

The Chambers Dictionary

The news that Chambers celebrated the centenary of its famous "20th Century Dictionary" last year has provoked new interest in the history of the firm founded by William and Robert Chambers. William, the elder of the two brothers, was born in 1800 and Robert two years later.

Their father, James, was a prosperous cotton manufacturer in Peebles but the business suffered from the introduction of power looms and he gave up manufacturing to open a draper's shop in the town. At that time, a number of French officer-prisoners of war were being held in Peebles and James took pity on them by supplying clothes from his shop on the understanding they would pay for them on their return to France. Needless to say, few of the debts were ever repaid and, finding themselves in serious financial difficulties, the business closed down and the family moved to Edinburgh.

Robert was left behind in Peebles to finish his schooling but it was necessary for William to find employment and he became apprenticed to Mr Sutherland, a bookseller, in Calton Street at a wage of four shillings per week. When Robert finished school he moved to Edinburgh and joined his brother in lodgings at the West

Port. His hopes of entering the University were not realised when his promised bursary did not appear. After a short spell working for a merchant in Pilrig, he took his brother's advice and rented a small shop in Leith Walk at six pounds per year. There, he opened a bookshop although the only stock he had available was that left from his father's library and his own schoolbooks. He was then sixteen years of age.

When William's apprenticeship ended he found himself out of work and had to leave his lodgings. His fortunes changed, however, when, at the age of nineteen, a London bookseller came to Edinburgh to set up a trade sale. William sought a job with him and was employed unpacking and helping to display the books. At the end of a successful sale, the bookseller offered William ten pounds worth of stock on the understanding he would receive payment in due course.

In time, William's profits from the sales of the books amounted to three pounds and with this money he bought a small hand press from a local newspaper office.

Although without previous training in either printing or binding, he printed and

bound 750 copies of "The Songs of Robert Burns". He had sufficient type for eight pages only which meant printing that number, distributing the type for the next eight pages and so on until he completed the one hundred page extent.

His profit from "The Songs of Burns" amounted to nine pounds and with this he purchased a new fount of type. In addition, he cut large-sized wooden letters for printing bills and notices. Two of his "best sellers" were TO LET signs for house agents and DOG LOST for upset owners!

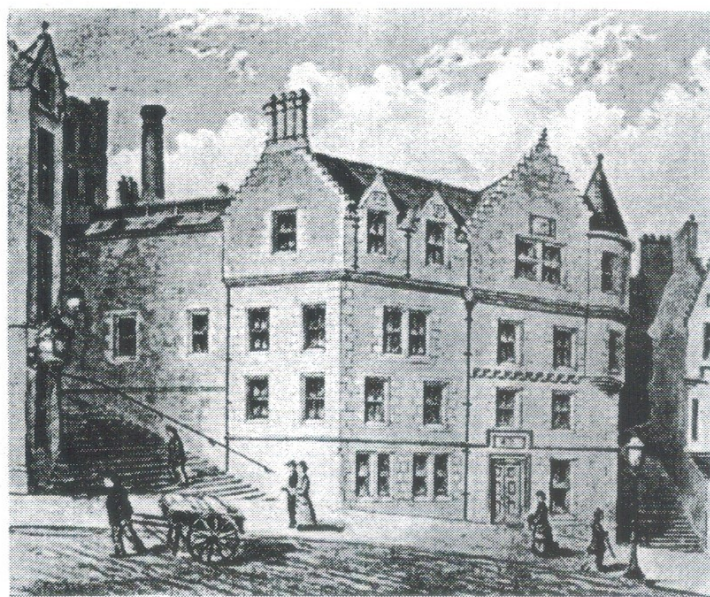
With his new types, William composed, printed and bound his brother's book "The Traditions of Edinburgh". Not only was it a successful publication at the time but also - and remarkably - it still remains in print today.

In 1832 the brothers launched their biggest venture to date with the publication of "Chambers's Journal", a weekly magazine costing 1 1/2 pence. With Robert as editor and William as printer, it was an immediate success and within a few years the circulation had risen to 84,000 copies. Not only did this achievement bring an end to their financial problems; it also marked the founding of the business of W. and R. Chambers.

In the following years the company first entered the field of popular education with further success. The "Educational Course" included more than one hundred titles on a wide range of subjects and this was followed by "Chambers's Encyclopaedia" which appeared between 1859 and 1968 in 520 parts at 1 1/2 pence each.

Their first dictionary, edited by Arnold Cooley, was published in 1861 and this was followed in 1867 by "Chambers's Etymological Dictionary", compiled by James Donald. In 1872 an enlarged version of Donald's dictionary was published under the title "Chambers's English Dictionary" and, in 1901, the Reverend Thomas Davidson produced the famous "Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary".

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W. & R. Chambers's Printing Office, in Cockburn Street, Edinburgh 1879

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William Chambers, LLD Lord Provost of Edinburgh 1865 – 69

From their modest beginnings, the remarkable achievements of William and Robert Chambers were widely recognised in their later years. William received an honorary law degree from the University of Edinburgh while Robert was honoured by a similar degree from the University of St. Andrews.

William became Lord Provost of Edinburgh twice and during that period devoted a great deal of time to improving the city environment by clearing slums and widening streets, including Chambers Street where his statue stands. Perhaps his most demanding task was the restoration of St. Giles Cathedral to which he donated a considerable sum of money. Sadly, he died three days before the church was re-opened in 1883.

(Contributed by Robert Thomson)

Clark Collection

SPRAT continues to make donations of books and other suitable items to the collection which has had an eventful year with the mounting of a number of small displays, including one of Bibles and other religious texts to mark the visit of Lord Younger to Napier University. Material from the collection has also contributed to two projects on printing history accessible through SCRAN and features in a recently produced interactive CD ROM on "the book". Our total donations have been received, material allocated or distributed as agreed and cataloguing undertaken.

LEITH LINKS

First Newspaper:

Scotland's first newspaper, *Mercurius Scoticus*, was published in 1651, and although no mention is made the printer or where it was printed, it is thought that it was produced in Leith. It was a weekly publication running to eight pages, and contained news which was obtained from London. Within a year, this paper had given way to a newspaper which was published in London, but reprinted in Leith, and this was followed shortly afterwards by the *Mercurius Politicus*, which was printed in Leith for Scottish consumption until 1655, when it was reprinted in Edinburgh.

Yuletide Cards:

In 1841, Charles Drummond, a Leith printer and publisher produced what is thought to have been the first ever Yuletide card in Britain, and sold it from his shop in the Kirkgate. The idea had come from his friend Thomas Sturrock of Trinity, and the card showed a smiling, chubby cheeked boy with the greeting: "A Gude New Year and mony o' them." The first distinctive Christmas Card was produced in London two years later, and with the Victorian emphasis on Christmas, it became one of the great annual festivals. It also brought a revival of popularity in Edinburgh after its relative obscurity following the Reformation in the sixteenth century.

The Wright/Write Stuff

Former camera operator with Bartholomew's, Gordon Wright, decided to close down his small publishing firm after many years and now concentrates on his new second-hand book and first editions business as well as the picture archive he has amassed over many years. His first mail order catalogues were sent out in Spring 2001 covering "second-hand, fine and rare Scottish books" as well as books published by Gordon Wright Publishing (as was). He can be contacted at 25 Mayfield Road, Edinburgh, EH9 2NQ.

The opportunity of publishing, befriending and photographing many of Scotland's most notable literary figures resulted in a pictorial exhibition accompanied by a special events programme which was held in Edinburgh's National Library of Scotland during the period June 1 to 31 October, 2001.

Obituary: Leonard Anderson

The death of Len Anderson in June, 2001 at age 75 brought memories of his spell as Managing Director of Morrison & Gibb Limited in the period from 1968-71. Born and educated in Hartlepool, he obtained a scholarship to Jesus College, Cambridge. After commissioned war service in the army, he returned to Cambridge where he obtained a degree in Modern Languages.

His industry career was a varied and interesting one. Starting as a management trainee with Brooke Bond Tea Company, he became their export sales manager for northern Europe before joining PA Management Consultants. He moved back into industry, eventually joining Morrison & Gibb in 1968 where he was closely involved with the take-over of Thomas Nelson Printers Ltd which, together with Steel Brothers (Carlisle) Ltd., web offset printers, and the facilities of W. & A. K. Johnston, the litho printers, publishers and cartographers formed a new Scottish Printing Group.

Mr Anderson remained in charge until 1971 when the Company was taken over by the Oxley Press Group. He ended his career as director, Chartered Institute of Marketing, with responsibility for Scotland, Northern Ireland and the north of England. JCK



Neill & Co Ltd

For over 200 years the members of two families – Neills & Frasers controlled the oldest printing house in Scotland, founded in 1749 when Patrick Neill became a partner in the publishing firm of Hamilton & Balfour, "Printers to the Town and College of Edinburgh" (Minutes of the Town Council 17th December 1749). In 1963 Neill was still printing for the City and Royal Burgh of Edinburgh from 212 Causewayside but ceased trading ten years later.

New Scottish Print History

Akros Publications have recently published a new book on typography by Dr Duncan Glen entitled "Printing Type Designs, A New History from Gutenberg to 2000 and copies can be obtained from Akros Publications, 33 Lady Nairn Avenue, Kirkcaldy, Fife, Scotland KY1 2AW.

Dr Glen taught typography from 1960-1986 and was Professor of Visual Communication at Nottingham Trent University. He first worked in printing in 1948 and was engaged in publishing in London from 1956. From 1964, he has been an independent publisher, editor, critic, poet and historian of Scottish literature.

SAPPHIRE: Developments

It is understood that an administrative appointment has been made to SAPPHIRE staff from Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh and, also, that Dr Heather Holmes has resigned her position with the project to take up a Government post. The Trustees have agreed to await the outcome of SAPPHIRE's present funding and management position before any possible reconsideration of its present views on the Project's policy and control.

Miscellaneous: from NPHT Newsletter

The Irish National Printing Museum, located in the Garrison Chapel at Beggars Bush, Dublin, held a one-day Gutenberg Festival in February, 2001. There were demonstrations of Intertype, Linotype and Monotype castings with printing carried out on their large Columbian platen and Wharfedale presses. The museum, which welcomes visitors, is open daily from 1 May to 30 September and also on Tuesdays, Thursdays and weekends during the winter months. Further information is available on the web at npmuseum@dol.ie.

A Centre for Writing, Publishing and Printing History - CWPPH - has been established by the University of Reading with Dr Simon Eliot, its first Director, being appointed also as the first Professor of Publishing and Printing History in the country. His responsibilities as Director are for developing the Centre as a centre of research and teaching.

Further information is available from Professor Simon Eliot, CWPPH, Department of Typography and Graphic Communication, 2 Earley Gate, Whiteknights, Reading RG6 6AU (Tel. 0118 931 8081) or by e-mail to s.j.eliot@reading.ac.uk

Production of NewSPRAT

This eighth issue of the SPRAT newsletter is typeset in Times. The scanning and sizing of illustrations was done using Adobe Photoshop; pagination was done using Adobe PageMaker on an Apple Macintosh platform.

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The trustees of SPRAT greatly appreciate the continued support and sponsorship of all concerned with the production of this newsletter.

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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NPHT grant is put to use

In his latest Newsletter, David Winkworth records that, probably due to the foot and mouth outbreak, there had been a drop in visitors during 2001 to his Cockermouth Print Museum. He reports that work is continuing with the Model 70SM Linotype, for which the NPHT allocated a grant of £200. The museum now has five Linotypes, three of which are functional. It also has a Ludlow in operation.

Seeking a 'Titan'

Commander Tim Honnor, who has a museum attached to his printing works at Nairn, Scotland, is seeking a 'Titan' cylinder machine. He would also be interested in acquiring Stephenson Blake's Marina Script, Perpetua, and Verona. If you can help, please ring him on 01667-454508.