

A bibliophile's letter from Great Britain

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A BIBLIOPHILE'S LETTER FROM GREAT BRITAIN

After my long letter last winter I am not so sure exactly how to begin again. I do remember writing a disclaimer to any pretensions of bibliographical skill. Since then I have become a member of the Bibliographical Society, London, and spent a great deal of my spare time preparing a bibliographical note on sixteenth century geometrically constructed alphabets and their facsimiles. I doubt if there is any contradiction here. Especially not when I remember that in my second letter (1962) I gaily attributed a copy of the Moyllus alphabet to its copyist, Herrn Schedel, and I would certainly have given Pieter Coecke's alphabet to Serlio if I had known about it at the time. All this I have confessed and put to rights in my new booklet *Lines of the Alphabet*, a proof of which was issued this year in October. The very fact that I issue it first as a proof shows what I mean by disclaiming bibliographical skill... although I have no hesitation in supporting my rights in this field of minor research.

The Swiss writing master Urban Wyss is included in *Lines of the Alphabet* even though he does not show geometrically constructed letters. This inclusion I have explained on account of some geometric constructions being extremely slight and some writing masters who have not made geometric demonstrations being particularly important. The Wyss writing book appeared in Zürich in 1549. Dr. Hermann Kienzle published an article on this manual in *Graphis* 11/12, 1945. He describes it as a book of one hundred pages, but there are two copies in the British Museum one of which contains fifty-six leaves. I also discovered in the catalogue of the British Museum that a facsimile of Urban Wyss's

book was issued from Basel in 1927. Unfortunately there is no longer a copy in the Museum, but I have discovered one in Glasgow University Library.

James Moran published this year (for the Kynoch Press) an annual of letterforms entitled *Alphabet*. It contains serious contributions to the study of letterforms in action from the pen of Arrighi to the neon signs in Piccadilly Circus. James Mosley contributes an article 'Trajan Revived' which is especially well documented and illustrated (see illustration 1). Berthold Wolpe writes on the large type letters of William Caslon II (up to 13 lines pica). This piece of original research is also well documented and illustrated. Alfred Fairbank continues the study of Arrighi in an article, 'Italic in its own Right', drawing on material not available when Stanley Morison and James Wardrop wrote on the same subject. The article is printed in Narrow Bembo Italic which is the first trial cutting of Mr. Fairbank's own typeface and which shows a number of faults which he would dearly have liked corrected. The designer of this Fairbank item has done him a disservice in printing the type on glossy, coated paper. This, coupled with the printer's wide word spacing, troubles the eye of the reader.

From the Ashantilly Press at Darien in Georgia, I received a copy of *The Field Diary of a Confederate Soldier* by Draughton Stith Haynes, grandfather of the printer, William G. Haynes (also illustration 1). It is comparatively rare for a private press to issue an original text of some value and interest in an exciting way. The type used is Narrow Bembo Italic and the setting and printing evidently contrast favourably with the professional Kynoch Press setting

The Half Iron



DEvised BY
X'TOPHER BRADSHAW
& JOHN RYDER



A FORM OF PROPOSAL

APRIL 1955

(See page 188)

A half iron is the smallest font of type; and this particular one is a proposed regular meeting of people (and their guests) concerned not too narrowly with the arts of printing - small enough to be organised without fuss, select enough to avoid boredom and frustration, and wide enough in interest to avoid sinking into a professional rut.

The plan suggested is therefore:

1. Up to 10 members, elected mem. con.
2. Meetings about bi-monthly, at members' homes, or as convenient; each to act as host in turn and make arrangements, & to have no other liability.
3. Meetings to be about 7-30 pm. with informal buffer supper only. Talks demonstrations papers and other amusements whenever good enough material is available.
4. Each member to be allowed to bring three ones in a year, to keep the total number at a meeting to 15 or less.

in *Alphabet* (see above). Haynes has, of course, printed on antique paper, but he has also used an unjustified line which has enabled him to maintain proper word spacing. His inventiveness in describing the military action with printers' flowers in the margins must be commended. With such fleurons he has illustrated men on the march, dead soldiers, balloons, brushwood, breastworks, towns, battles, explosions, night, rain, encampments of tents, crossing a stream waist-high in water, etc.

My next illustration (2) shows a broadsheet from the foremost English private press, Lion & Unicorn of the Royal College of Art. This describes the next three books in their programme. First a collection of unpublished drawings of Stanley Spencer some of which are annotated in Spencer's own hand. The second is an essay by Stanley Morison on decoration and ornament of Giovanantonio Tagliente. The third book is by Adrian Stokes on Venice with illustrations by John Piper.

The third illustration comes from *Copy and Print in the Netherlands* issued from Amsterdam in 1963. It shows a copperplate proof together with MS. copy for an opening in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and an opening from the printed version. The whole book is a magnificent atlas of bibliography and many readers will be astonished to see how much MS. copy and layout, corrected proof, and other relevant material has been preserved. The edition of Ovid to which the illustration refers was printed by Plantin at Antwerp in 1591.

No letter covering a year's events could be complete without references to the Officina Bodoni and I particularly wish to record the private issue of Dr. Mardersteig's book No. 105, printed at Verona, entitled *De Divina Proportione di Luca Pacioli*. It contains the original Italian text of 1498 printed on the hand-press in Bembo in red and black, and also a facsimile in colour of Leonardo da Vinci's *I Corpi Regolari*. My fourth illustration shows an opening with two da

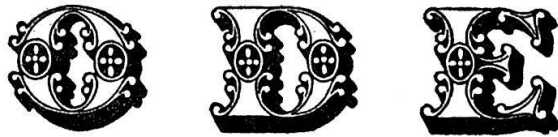
Vinci drawings. Unfortunately for bibliophiles like myself the issue was made for private circulation by Mediobanca, Milan. I doubt the regular appearance of this book on the market.

At the time of writing this letter Dr. Mardersteig is preparing to publish a facsimile of Francesco Torniello's alphabet. This is a geometrically constructed set of Roman letters, based on Pacioli. Torniello was a student of Pacioli and the printed version of his alphabet was issued in 1517. It is an extremely rare item and I have seen few references to it.

My first letter which was largely about private presses also contained some remarks about a certain lady who found herself in trouble in the High Court, namely, Lady Chatterley. This year, another literary friend of mine has been in similar trouble, but has not had the good fortune to be tried by jury. She is Fanny Hill. Expert witnesses were allowed at the Magistrate's court, and Marghanita Laski told Sir Robert Blundell at Bow Street that she found *Fanny Hill* a gay little book. But the Magistrate ordered Fanny Hill to be burned as a pornographic witch. In Birmingham Fanny Hill suffered a similar non-jury verdict. But in Denmark she was acquitted. Since these events a great deal has appeared in the press about such trials without jury in cases where the accused, the publishers, were clearly prepared to defend their case and would have welcomed a jury. If erotic stimulation is held to be corruption, what a very sad outlook on life.

On Monday the 11th of May, 1964, at eleven o'clock precisely at Sotheby's of New Bond Street, London, began an auction sale in which the literary MSS. of Graham Greene were offered by Mr. Hobson. Bertram Rota representing me representing The Bodley Head was commissioned to bid for certain items relating to books which The Bodley Head had recently published. We were wasting our time for Mr. L. D. Feldman (The House of El Dieff, New York) was there and was bidding for Texas University

A FORMAL



or Illuminated Address of Welcome,
on an Auspicious Occasion, viz.

A DINNER

of the Distinguished Members of the

DOUBLE CROWN CLUB

in Corpus Christi College

on Friday the Twenty-Sixth day of June

MCMLXIV

With which is Incorporated,

or bound in,

a General Survey,

or Alarming Prospect,

of the Gentlemen of the Club



*Know you her secret none can utter,
Hers of the Book, the Doubled Crown?*

(See page 188)

Library. Whatever anyone bid he bid more, usually up £50 at a time by the faintest flick of an eyelid. The autograph MS., for instance, of *The Power and the Glory* went for £2000. This book, Graham Greene wrote in an introduction not yet published here but privately issued by Norstedts of Stockholm in 1962, 'gives me more satisfaction than any other I have written...' The selling of MSS. is a kind of subsidiary right exclusive to the author, and with the auction figure for *The Power and the Glory* in mind it is amusing to consider the author's royalty from the first English edition, 3500 copies yielding, perhaps, £175.

For Max Reinhardt I very much wanted to secure the MS. of *Carving a Statue*. Mr. Reinhardt will probably publish this new play towards the end of 1964. Without Mr. Feldman we had reckoned on securing it, but unfortunately it went for £500. This included the MS. and three typescript drafts corrected in the author's hand. Students of Graham Greene's writings enjoying the facilities of Texas University Library may like to know that the final typescript version, now in short galley proof, has already been substantially revised.

Some time last winter Atticus wrote in the *Sunday Times* an article entitled 'Networks' in which he explained how a few like-minded people unofficially grouped themselves. Such groups, or networks, being small and private and without any official mouthpiece, remain somewhat difficult to discover. Atticus named one in publishing circles composed of a handful of men who had once worked for Weidenfeld & Nicolson. It's just ten years ago that Christopher Bradshaw and I threw such a network over a very small group of personal friends broadly connected by our professional uses of the Roman alphabet. We called it 'The Half-Iron' which is the smallest fount of type and an archaic enough term to remain as little known as our network itself. I printed a page stating the title and Bradshaw wrote a page stating the plan. So far the network has

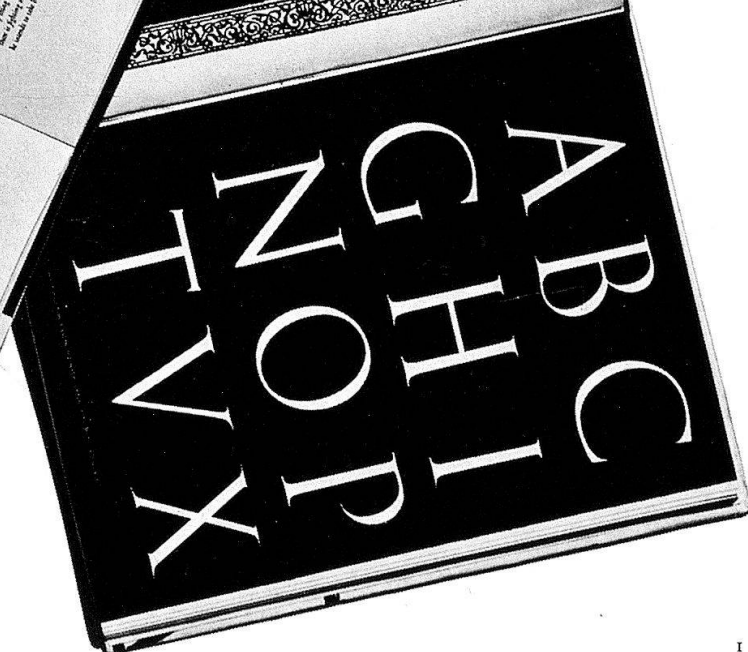
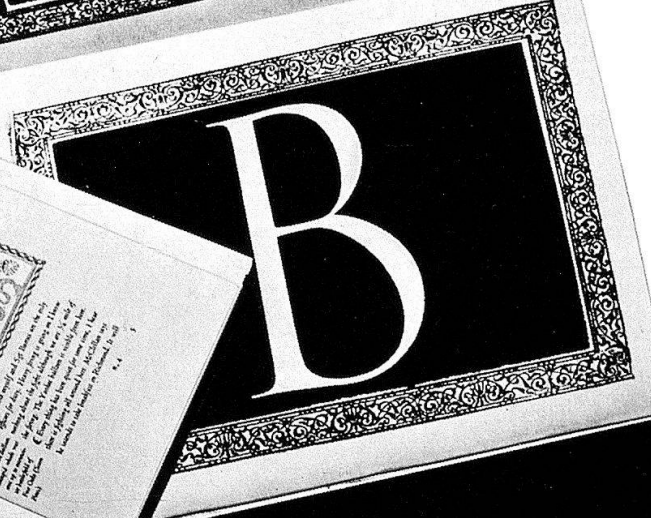
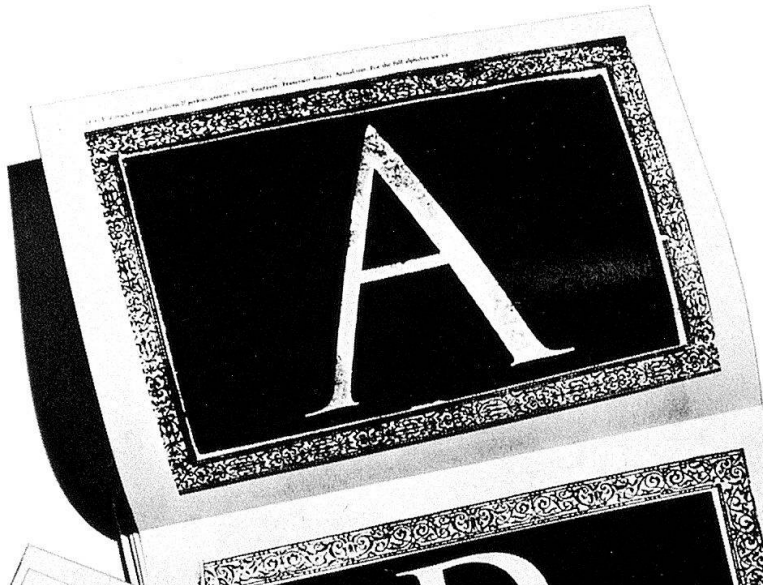
not been overworked, but it now figures in our minds as an important step with possible bibliographical implications. And to celebrate its tenth year of survival the Stellar Press has been kind enough to print this first document for *Librarianum*.

An earlier network, 'The Flying Fame', operated in 1912 with Claude Lovat Fraser, Ralph Hodgson and Holbrook Jackson who later became the first president of the Double Crown Club when it was founded in 1924. The 175th dinner of the Double Crown Club has been celebrated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in June this summer with a pre-dinner visit to the University Press and an after dinner visit to the Bodleian Library, particularly to the beautifully restored Duke Humphrey library, and also, in accord with the mood of the members, to the roof of Duke Humphrey to see the setting sun on the architectural delights of Oxford. As my final illustration I show the cover, slightly reduced, of an interesting piece of printing – one of three pieces specially made for this occasion.



CAPTIONS TO THE FOLLOWING ILLUSTRATIONS

- 1 *An opening with a fold-out from James Mosley's article 'Trajan Revived' from the first issue of 'Alphabet'. Lying across is the Ashantilly Press book 'The Field Diary of a Confederate Soldier'.*
- 2 *A broadsheet announcement from the Lion & Unicorn Press (58 × 42 cm) to its subscribers giving details of three new books in preparation.*
- 3 *Illustrations from 'Copy and Print in the Netherlands' showing (above) manuscript copy and proof engraving, and (below) a typographical proof of the same opening from Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' printed by Plantin at Antwerp in 1591.*
- 4 *Leonardo da Vinci's drawings included in Dr. Mardersteig's 'De Divina Proportione di Luca Pacioli' printed at Verona in 1956 for Mediolanica, Milan.*



LION AND UNICORN PRESS

Royal College of Art Exhibition Road, London SW7

We have pleasure in announcing the titles for the new series of Lion and Unicorn Press books.

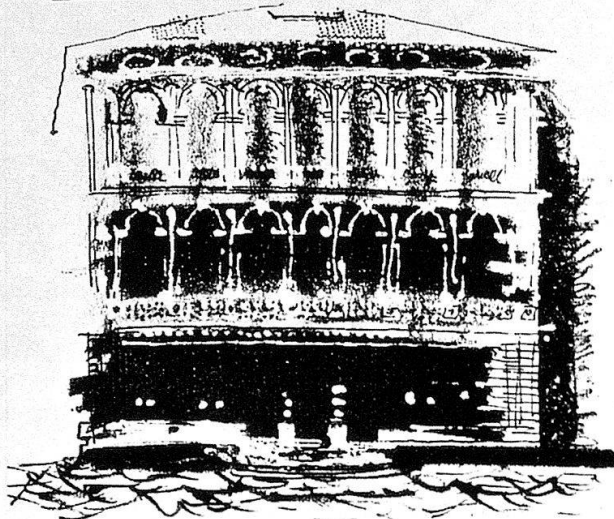
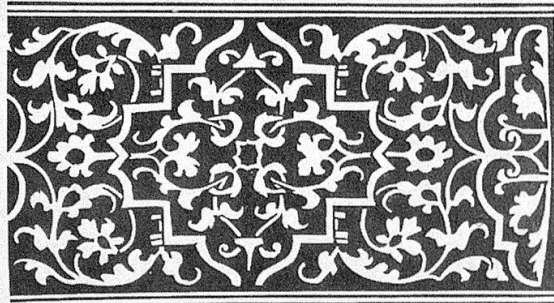
The first of the series (the sixth since the foundation of the Press) is a collection of drawings by **Stanley Spencer**. These drawings have not hitherto been published and have been made available to the Press by kind permission of Viscount Astor. The Introduction and notes on the drawings are by Mr Colin Hayes ARA, who compiled the collection from a number of Stanley Spencer's scrapbooks. Some of the drawings, which are reproduced by photo-lithography slightly smaller than the originals, are annotated in Stanley Spencer's handwriting. (Introduction 16 pp. 60 plates and notes 128 pp. Size 13½" x 9½".) This book will be ready for circulation to subscribers in May.

The second book, which was mentioned in our previous prospectus, will be a critical essay by Mr Stanley Morison on the decorative and ornamental work of the 16th century writing master **Tagliente**. This publication falls into line with our series of writing books, as it shows the use of ornament by one of the great writing masters and has special interest to-day in relation to the contemporary revival of decoration. The plates for the book are already chosen and discussions on the design are under way. (50 plates, about 64 text pp.)

'**Venice**', the third and last book of the series, will consist of text by Adrian Stokes and illustrations by John Piper. Mr Piper has carried out these illustrations especially for the Press and he is at the moment working on the design of the book, and the lithographic reproduction of the plates, with College students. It replaces 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' previously announced for this series.

As we have recently been able to reorganize the production work of the Press, we hope that our timetable will become less erratic. We are indeed appreciative of our subscribers' patience and hope that in future such forbearance will no longer be necessary. Full details for continued or new subscriptions will be found in the forms enclosed with this prospectus.

Spring 1964



99.



Minos victor cum Atheniensibus stipendium imposuisset, ut nobiliu nonnulli quotannis ad Labyrinthu, à Daidalo artificioso exstructu, in Creta mitterentur, Minotauru (quem Pasiphaë Solis filia, Minois uxor, eiusdè Daidali fabri ope, tauro iuncta enixa fuerat) obijciendi: tertio stipendio Theseus, Egei & Athra filius, in Creta insula deuectus, Ariadna regis filia, que iuuenis amore arserat, ope & consilio periculum capitis effugit.

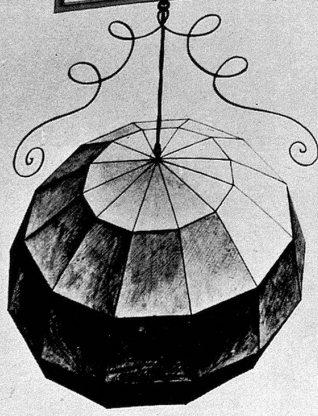
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SEPTVAGINTA DVARVM
BASIVM SOLIDVM

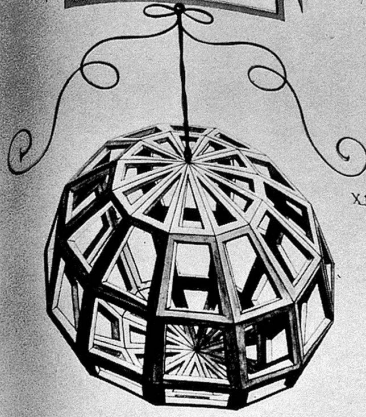
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Edenuntia Julia Balasubala

SEPTVAGINTA DVARVM
BASIVM VACVVM

XLI



Edenuntia Julia Balasubala