

# A bibliophile's letter from Great Britain

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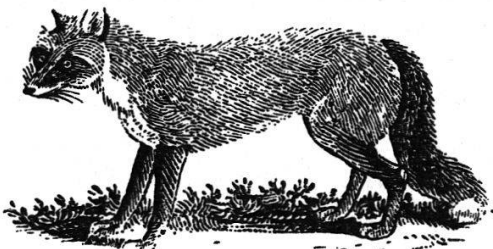
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A BIBLIOPHILE'S LETTER FROM GREAT BRITAIN

There are three reasons for the change in style of this letter. The first is that, after several years, I feel any change in the presentation would be welcome. The second is that there is so much in which I am involved or partly involved or interested that some kind of abbreviation has become a necessity. And thirdly, arising from the second reason, so little time is left for any other method.

THOMAS BEWICK. Went with Michael Harvey and Anthony Rota to Sotheby's, 31 January. Lord John Kerr hammered eight lots of original woodcut blocks by Thomas and John Bewick to a saleroom of about fifty bidders. More exciting than any horserace. Had been told the blocks would fetch from £1 to £2 each: but had not believed. The first lot, twelve blocks of Thomas Bewick, went for £200 to Elkin Mathews. The second lot, also of Thomas Bewick, ten blocks, went to Rota for £190. The eight lots contained 110 blocks and fetched £980. Some of these have now been sold separately for £25 each.

Both lots bought by Anthony Rota have been recorded as sets of proofs in small editions. Lot 196 (fifty-four cuts) by the Capricorn Press, London, in an edition of five copies on loose sheets, 89 × 127 mm, in card wrappers and lot 192 (ten blocks) as an edition of six copies by the Miniature Press, Richmond, 267 × 165 mm, thread sewn in



Thomas Bewick. From McQuinn's "A Description of more than Three Hundred Animals"

paper covers (see illustration 1). The fox (see below) from lot 192 appeared originally in McQuinn's *A Description of more than Three Hundred Animals*. (Bertram Rota offered some of these Bewick cuts at the Book Collector's Fair in June at the National Book League, Albemarle Street, where objects associated with books are not uncommon. But an outsider appeared this year in the shape of a morocco case for a cardinal's mitre.)

WILLIAM CAXTON. Sotheby's, Monday 27 June, part of the MS of William Caxton's translation of *Ovyde of Methamorpheseos*, 1480, sold for £90,000. A record price for any MS. The portion sold contains Books 1 to 9, was written on paper, 305 × 210 mm, includes four illustrations, consists of 272 leaves, folio 71 being damaged. Entry in Sotheby's catalogue runs to five pages. The other part of this MS, books 10 to 15, was bought at auction by Samuel Pepys in 1688 and is still intact at the Pepys Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge. How the first part came into the collection of Sir Thomas Phillipps is not known, and was only recently identified. *The Times* reports it as being found amongst valueless material. The whole story of the Phillipps collection is nearly incredible. How the Robinson brothers of Pall Mall bought from the Phillipps family the entire collection for £100,000 and transported it in lorry-loads to a warehouse. How they have been selling it piece by piece, ever since and have given up their bookselling establishment in Pall Mall. After all these years of selling off some of the best pieces, this Caxton "remnant" fetched only £10,000 short of the price paid for the entire Phillipps collection.

OFFICINA BODONI. In 1954 Giovanni Mardersteig was invited to exhibit his books in the King's Library of the British Museum. Last year the collection was brought up to

date and exhibited in Brussels and in The Hague. Books printed on the handpress of the Officina Bodoni are otherwise rarely seen and it is to be hoped that further exhibitions will follow.

Dr Mardersteig was in London with his wife this summer, taking a holiday, visiting friends and places. His printing and publishing programme for the immediate future is excitingly full. For Faber & Faber another Ezra Pound volume of poetry. He is also printing Cardinal Bembo's *De Aetna* (Venice, 1495) in the original and with an English translation, the Italian text in his typeface, Griffo, and the translation in Monotype Bembo. Another copy of Torriello's writing book has come to light and possibly also some details of Francesco Torriello's life which may help Dr Mardersteig to complete his facsimile of the *Opera del modo*, etc. The facsimile of Tagliente's first writing book progresses. Complete bibliographical details concerning the production of an early sixteenth century book have been assembled and are to appear in Italian and English editions. A great deal of Giovanni Mardersteig's life has been spent in bibliographical searching which has proved as exciting as any spy thriller – and somewhat more rewarding. This new document, astonishing in its completeness, is just one example. Now we know something of the life of the master at Officina Bodoni nothing short of an autobiographical account will satisfy.

MAURICE SENDAK. Children's book illustrator of rare talent. *Hector Protector* was published in New York in 1965 (see illustration 2). Contains two very short, near to nonsense, nursery rhymes illustrated with a deft understanding of children's imagination and a skill of drawing which is contemporary and yet shows an embracing knowledge of children's book illustration from the first (Comenius: *Orbis sensualium pictus*, 1654) through the centuries of cuts and copper engravings and lithographic stones and plates to colour woodblock printing (Kate Greenaway books, etc.), to the variety of styles and

processes of today. The drawing of *Hector Protector* has something in common with seventeenth century copper engraving and yet is of the same age of freedom and liveliness as Sendak's contemporaries, Joseph Low in America and Gerald Rose in England. Such notable characters are drawn as Sendak's own dog, Prince Albert and Queen Victoria. The colouring is muted and subtle.

BEATRIX POTTER. Celebrating the centenary of Beatrix Potter's birth, a special exhibition at the National Book League. Containing early picture letters, drawings, sketch books, MSS, watercolours, family photographs, and the code writing of her journals. An excellent catalogue prepared by Leslie Linder for the National Book League. After several unsuccessful attempts, Mr Linder has recently unravelled the code in which Beatrix Potter wrote her journal. Frederick Warne has now published this *Journal* (1881 to 1897). The writing of some of Potter's early work is almost as small as in the Brontë children's miniature books made at Haworth Parsonage.

JOHN NEWBERY. In 1744 Newbery published *A Little Pretty Pocket Book*. This set a milestone in publishing for children in that it was "intended for the instruction and amusement of children" instead of simply for their instruction. The frontispiece reads: "Instruction with Delight" and the title page reads "A new attempt of teach children the use of the English alphabet, by way of diversion". The price of this 96-page book was sixpence. An advertisement in the *Penny London Morning Advertiser* (18 June, 1744) reads: "Price of the Book alone 6d with Ball or Pincushion 8d." Now the University Press, Oxford, has published a facsimile of the 1767 edition made from a copy in the British Museum. Mrs M. F. Thwaite has contributed an introduction to Newbery and his times and also a bibliography of books published by John Newbery.

WRITING MANUALS. A number of early writing books have been offered for sale dur-

ing the last few months. I give only brief details to indicate titles and present day values.

Dürer: 3 books including *Underweysung*, Schab, N.Y., \$5000.

Arrighi: *La Operina* and *Il Modo* (1525), Breslau, London, £600.

Yciar: *Recopilacion Subtilissima* (1548), Thomas, London, £300.

Palatino: *Libro nelqual s'insegna* (1561), Thomas, London, £125.

Palatino: *Libro nelqual s'insegna* (1561), Hertzberger, Amsterdam, £200.

Tagliente: *La vera arte* (1547), Hertzberger, Amsterdam, £200.

Amphiareo: *Un novo modo* (1548), Sandbergs, Stockholm, \$1650.

Facsimiles come on the market as rarely as the original books and no new facsimiles have been made recently. But it has been noted in ATPAS Bulletin (Spring 1966) that a number of printing schools in Britain are following the plan suggested in *Lines of the Alphabet* and making facsimiles. At Dundee an Amphiareo is in progress; at Bourne-mouth, Cresci; at Maidstone, Ruano; at Camberwell, Fugger; at London College, Dürer. This is a start. Others may follow.

STELLAR PRESS. Since producing *Lines of the Alphabet* last year, the Stellar Press has printed a book of poems for Robert Graves. The small, signed, edition of 330 copies was fully subscribed before publication. During the last three years a catalogue of Dorothy Glover's and Graham Greene's collection of Victorian detective fiction has been in preparation. And now, Bill Hummerstone at the Stellar Press has finished printing it. The edition is limited (500 copies) and is signed by Graham Greene and Dorothy Glover who searched for a great many of the books with him and who now keeps the collection. It is also signed by John Carter who introduces the book and who, in 1934, made a catalogue of detective fiction for Scribner's of New York. That particular collection of 378 items (Scribner catalogue No. 98) was

bought at auction by a lady who gave it, perhaps the most complete collection at that time, to her local police station library!

After the success of Stellar's calendar for 1966 showing six plates from William Daniell's *A Voyage Round Great Britain*, Bodley Head (for Nattali & Maurice) commissioned Iain Bain to write an account of William Daniell with special reference to the survival of the original aquatint plates for the *Voyage*. This piece of original research which draws on the ledgers and account books of Longmans is illustrated and will be the Christmas booklet to be sent out by the directors of Bodley Head to their friends.

To keep the balance between antique and modern, the Stellar calendar for 1967 will contain six pictures drawn by Roy Spencer showing the fashionable look of King's Road, Chelsea, in 1966. Celebrates the success of Mary Quant. Is another monument to the technical skill of the Stellar printers.

VALUES. Paul Jennings has written (Observer, 17 July, 1966) with alarm on discovering that a Campbell's soup tin signed by Warhol may be regarded as a work of art. This is no incident in isolation but a disease of evaluation. Recently an urinal was hung in the Tate Gallery and catalogued under a famous artist's name, Marcel Duchamp, and entitled "Fountain". It is described simply as "ready made" and apparently became a work of art when Duchamp chose it. The act of choice equals the act of creation: the chosen object equals a work of art. This is not particularly funny but what is, is that Duchamp attempted to exhibit such a "ready made" at a New York gallery in 1917 and paid six dollars to do so. It seems that on this historic first occasion the hanging committee threw the urinal over a partition wall where it remained out of sight during the exhibition.

So, jumping a few steps at a time, all anyone needs is the money for publicity and public relations in order to gain the right to sign his name to a dustbin lid and exhibit it



(successfully) as a work of art. Is this the kind of truth now being taught in school? But another truth co-exists and is just as strongly evident. An example of this other truth, this anti-urinal truth, may be evaluated in the works of, for instance, Marino Marini. It is in the work of many other artists but I have made a personal choice in Marini's riders as world crusaders for the other truth (*the truth?*).

BEARDSLEY. This summer, at the Victoria & Albert Museum, a comprehensive exhibition of Aubrey Beardsley's work has been shown accompanied by a documented catalogue and an illustrated introduction to Beardsley's work by Brian Reade. This short introduction (Brian Reade is at work on a full-length biography of Beardsley) is quite the most sensitive, penetrating account of the relationships between Beardsley and John Lane, Dent, Hind, Oscar Wilde, Dowson, Smithers, Symons, Raffalovich, and between Beardsley and his family—especially his elder sister Mabel—yet to appear.

Before the exhibition closed police detectives seized 200 reproductions of pen-and-ink drawings by Beardsley from a shop in Regent Street. A warrant under the Obscene Publications Act of 1959 was issued from Bow Street after "a member of the public" had complained, and the question of prosecution is being considered. Drawings illustrating Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* were seized although no one asked the Victoria & Albert Museum to close its exhibition where these same designs were on public view. Nor has Her Majesty's Stationery Office been asked to withdraw the illustrated catalogue from publication. It would be interesting to see the result of someone publishing in some form or another the ceramic drawings from Greek pots and plates depicting satyrs with their full-sized and very erect members chasing young girls in topless dresses! These ceramics with their decorations have been on public view in the British Museum (and elsewhere, of course) for many years.

JOHN HAYWARD. In September last year John Hayward died. *The Book Collector*, which he edited for many years, printed a series of appreciations by friends and colleagues including George Rylands, Desmond Flower, Francis Meynell (for whom Hayward edited Donne and Swift), Graham Greene (who sent a copy of Sam Haskins' *Cowboy Kate* to Hayward just before he died and who received back the following: "The foot may be less quick to meet the morning dew as I enter my 60s, but I can still commit adultery in my heart with people like Kate"), Kathleen Raine (Hayward once told her: "I have read the whole of English poetry, *twice*"), Vera Russell (who remembers seeing in Hayward's flat in 1933 a special showing of Chaplin films, being intimidated by the presence of T. S. Eliot, but being reassured by the uproarious laughter), Christopher Sykes (who frequently met Hayward at Cyril Connolly's flat in the King's Road, Chelsea) and many others. In July this year, at Sotheby's, some presentation copies from Hayward's library were sold. Item 107, *The Revenge* by Graham Greene, an autobiographical fragment of five pages, was sold to Quaritch for £30. It is good to remember that this was the Bodley Head Christmas booklet for 1963, freely given to their friends in publishing, printing and bookselling.

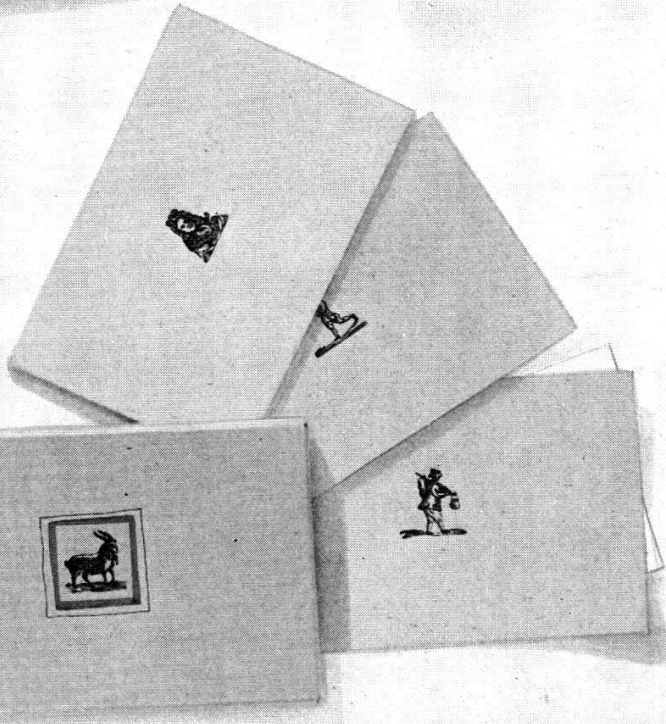
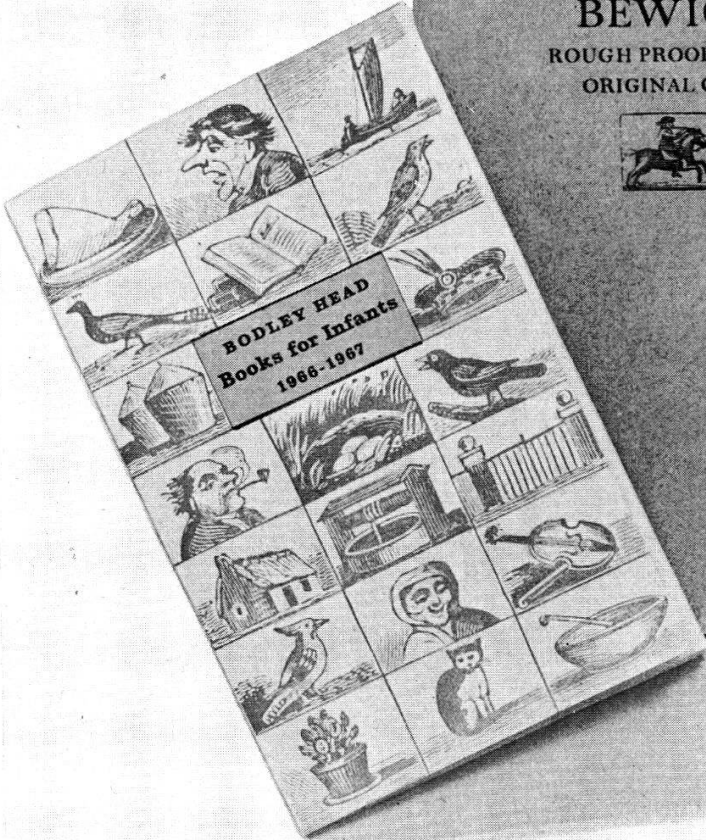
UNDER MILK WOOD. Widow Caitlin Thomas unsuccessfully sued The Times Book Company for wrongful possession of the orig-

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CAPTIONS  
TO THE ILLUSTRATIONS  
ON PAGES 153 TO 156

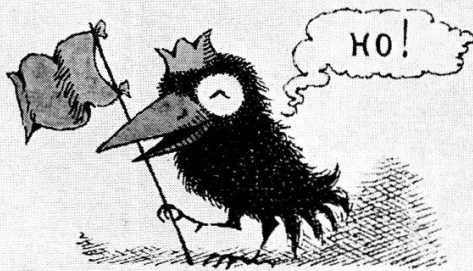
- 1 Two private editions of Bewick block proofs with blocks and with a catalogue cover employing a part of the larger block.
- 2 Maurice Sendak: title-page and drawing from *Hector Protector*.
- 3 New extended, heavy, Clarendon typeface designed by Michael Harvey.
- 4 (a) Sutton Nicholls engraving, ca. 1700, of an early auction and (b) Rowlandson water-colour of an auction at Sotheby's, ca. 1790.

Thomas  
BEWICK  
ROUGH PROOFS FROM  
ORIGINAL CUTS





# HECTOR PROTECTOR AND AS I WENT OVER THE WATER



TWO NURSERY RHYMES WITH PICTURES  
BY  
**MAURICE SENDAK**

HARPER & ROW • PUBLISHERS • NEW YORK



**A NEW  
ROMAN LETTER  
FOR THE  
BODLEY HEAD**



**DRAWN BY  
MICHAEL HARVEY**



**J P Q X Y Z**





inal manuscript in March this year. Mr Justice Plowman ruled that the MS had been given to Dylan Thomas' closest collaborator, his BBC producer, who was in such a large measure responsible for the success of the radio version of this poem. "Given" is not quite the right word since the poet, on the eve of his departure to America, had succeeded in losing the manuscript by leaving it in a pub or a taxi or elsewhere and it was therefore given on condition that it might first be found. This was 1953. In fact it was recovered and in 1961 entrusted to James Stevens Cox, bookseller, who sold it to The Times Book Company. Widow Caitlin was ordered to pay costs.

**TYPE SPECIMENS.** Menno Hertzberger of Amsterdam has just (August) issued a very welcome collotype facsimile of Claude Lamesle's specimen of 1742 with A. F. Johnson's introduction previously published in "The Library" in 1937. Progress on type specimen facsimiles from Bowes & Bowes has been slow but is gathering momentum now.

**PRINTING HISTORICAL SOCIETY.** Just published a litho reprint with notes by James Mosley of Horace Hart's *Charles Earl Stanhope and the Oxford University Press* which first appeared in 1896. Mr Mosley's notes include a list giving location, maker, number, etc., of sixteen Stanhope presses. The second issue of the *PHS Journal* not yet published, will contain The Albion Press, a document on development and construction with notes on surviving models by Reynolds Stone; Thomas Ross, practising copper-plate printer by Iain Bain; New Music Types (II) by Edmund Poole; Index of Wood-Letter founts at University Press, Oxford.

**TYPE DESIGN.** Two new typefaces have been made in recent months, both for specific and exclusive use. In 1965 the Pittsburg Bibliophiles published *Hunt Roman: The Birth of a Type*, an account of the designing and

making of Hermann Zapf's new type commissioned by the Hunt Botanical Library in Pittsburg for its publications.

This year Michael Harvey has drawn an alphabet of roman capitals for The Bodley Head. The original drawings were for fascia letters for new offices in Bow Street, Covent Garden. They have since been adapted to typographical requirements and two sizes of type have been made from engraved matrices. Some of the letters shown in illustration 3 are still experimental. The design has its origin in an inscription over the entrance to the old London School of Printing in Stamford Street. The building and inscribed stones have since been demolished.

**SPIRAL PRESS EXHIBITION.** Joseph Blumenthal specializes in good printing for the discerning customer and has succeeded in doing so since 1926. This year a retrospective exhibition of forty years work was mounted at the Pierpont Morgan Library, N.Y. His quarto catalogue includes a long introduction in which he describes his earliest essay into printing, the making of a new typeface at Frankfurt, his relationship with customers and especially with Robert Frost. He relates dryly but a sense of humour is clearly there between the lines, even underlining the lines when telling of a printing-house foreman who was so unhelpful to him as an apprentice that he had to leave—and later this foreman turned up at the spiral press looking for a job!

**BIBLIOPOLA.** Sigfred Taubert's picture history of the book trade, *Bibliopola*, was published in Hamburg this summer and also in London under a new imprint, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press. This venture of the famous paperback house will shortly commence publishing new non-fiction hardcover books. *Bibliopola*, imported from Hauswedell of Hamburg, is the first issue, in two quarto volumes designed by Hermann Zapf and has 258 plates, 42 of which are in colour (see illustration 4).

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