

It's Something in the Air

Bookmaking in Vancouver, B.C.

Robert McCamant

Although I asked just about every bookmaker I met in Vancouver why it was that there are so many of them in the area, I never got a satisfactory answer. Some even argued that there is not a concentration. By the standard of Iowa City (population about 60,000 with several presses) Vancouver (population about 600,000 with several presses) may not be a mecca. But by the standard of Chicago (population about 3,000,000 with several presses) Vancouver has a very active book-making scene.

Vancouver was the home of the first private press in Canada, the Private Press of Robert R. Reid. But Reid went away for most of his professional life, so the presses of today are not his descendants. As an explanation for the activity in the area I would point to three factors: two human, and one environmental. The first human factor is Jim Rimmer, who has been helping people in the Vancouver area solve their printing problems since the 1970s. The

second human factor is Crispin and Jan Elsted, through whose Barbarian Press many an aspiring printer has passed. But I suspect the environmental factor is actually the most important. Vancouver is an awfully nice place to live, and, at least until recently (when an influx of Asian money has distorted the economy), has also been a reasonably-priced place to live. There are good libraries with special collections departments at both the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University. The Emily Carr Institute of

Art has had bookmaking and typography classes in its curriculum for some time. The Alcuin Society, a Canada-wide group for book collectors, and a member of FABS, holds many of its functions in Vancouver. In short, if somebody throws a party for bookmakers and collectors, thirty or more people will show up without much notice.

What follows are the interviews I was able to schedule while in Vancouver in early spring of this year. They are in no particular order. I was not able to meet with some bookmakers I wanted to, and I probably didn't even know about others, so no claim of exhaustiveness is made or implied.

ROBERT REID

Robert Reid printed his first book in 1949 while he was a college student. And it was not a slender volume of a friend's poetry – it was a hundred pages of hand-set prose, printed impeccably in two colors on a platen press. It was a book of British Columbia history, a reprint of the second book printed in the province, *The Fraser Mines Vindicated*. "Between printing and playing golf, it's a wonder I ever graduated from University," Reid admits. "Thank heavens schools weren't so competitive in those days."

But the book was a stepping-stone to the rest of his life. It was the first Canadian book to win a Rounce and Coffin Club award in their Western Book Show. As a result, he made friends at the Book Club of California and visited the Bay Area, where Colonel Harris, of the legendary (and still extant, in a new form, as part of the non-profit Arion Press) typesetting company MacKenzie and Harris, took him around to meet the bookmakers of the Bay Area, including the Grabhorn brothers.

After graduation, he started a Vancouver printing business of his own, housed in a
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Robert Reid is a home town boy who made it big in Montreal and New York City, only to return to Vancouver for an encore career in bookmaking. Below, Kuthan's Menagerie.

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much larger, unrelated print shop. Takao Tanabe (who later worked with Reid) described: "We walked down to West Pender Street and looked in the window of this long, old building with printing presses marching down through the room.... We went in and said to the fellow, 'Mr. Reid?' And he said, 'No, no, you want the fellow in the back.... And there was Bob. He had one automatic press, and a smaller press, and type cases around.... We were impressed with this fellow because he had on a beautiful striped dress shirt, a beautifully tied tie, a sports jacket, polished shoes." [I can attest to the tie and shirt: he was wearing ties and striped shirts the four times I saw him.]

Reid remained in Vancouver until 1962. During the period he printed four more private press books, of which *Kuthan's Menagerie of Interesting Zoo Animals* seems to me the most extraordinary. The author and illustrator was a Czech immigrant whom Reid and his wife Felicity met and befriended. Its linocuts are stark and fascinating.

In 1962, Reid won a Canada Council grant to travel and learn about printing around the world. He took his young family. While on the trip, he learned that McGill University of Montreal was starting a press, and he applied for the job of being its in-house designer. He spent 10 years there.



The most extraordinary book he produced while at McGill was the *Lande Bibliography of Canadiana* published to celebrate the donation of the collection to McGill. Reid labored under the misimpression that Lande was underwriting the publishing of the book, and ordered up as lavish a presentation as any Canadian book ever printed. Reid wrote in notes published on his web site, "Every time Lawrence [Lande] came to check on how things were going, I'd tell him more of my thoughts, and he would

say 'Wonderful...do it.' Presuming Lande was paying for all this, I merrily went ahead, ordering paper from Spain, leather from England, the works. When the bills came in there was hell to pay, because it turned out the press was footing

the bill. But what a beautiful book!" Not only had the materials been purchased, but so had Heidelberg cylinder presses – bought used from the Toronto Star – so that the book was printed in house at the press.

A second very unusual book he supervised at McGill was *Portrait of a Period: A Collection of William Notman Photographs 1856-1915*. McGill had received 40,000 glass plate negatives. Reid determined that the only way to do them justice was to create the film to reproduce them directly from the negatives; making an intermediate print, as traditionally done, would destroy the subtleties present in the plates. The films were used to produce dot-on-top-of-dot duotones, a rarely-used process that produced extraordinary results. Copies of the book now sell for up to \$350 on Abebooks.

From 1974 to 1998, Reid lived in New York and New Haven, packaging books for major publishers. Many were guides to B&Bs and country inns, and featured beautiful photography. While living in New Haven he set up an elaborate private press, but it did not produce much work. The notable exception was *Pixie Meat*, a 1990 collaboration with cartoonist/illustrators Charles Burns, Gary Panter and Tom De Haven.

Reid decided to return to Vancouver in 1998. Since coming back he has collaborated with Heavenly Monkey publisher Rollin Milroy on two titles (*Reid's Leaves: A Bibliography of Robert R. Reid's Private Press* and *A Letter from Carl Dair About the Papermills of Amalfi, Italy*). And he has created a series of autobiographical books, printed electronically and handsomely bound. These feature copious specimens from the collection of books and ephemera that surround him in his apartment in Vancouver's West End.

In fall of 2007, the Alcuin Society and Simon Fraser University held "Reidfest" to celebrate his many contributions to the world of design and books at large as well as his particular contributions within the Vancouver community.

Robert Reid Printing
www.robertreidprinting.ca
604-681-1873

BARBARA HODGSON

Barbara Hodgson's path to the world of fine publishing included an unusual detour:

from 1995 through 2007 she was a widely-distributed author of 14 trade books, some fiction and some nonfiction, but all lavishly illustrated with historic and found materials from her world travels.

She had for many years been a book designer, working for the Vancouver house Douglas & McIntyre. "It didn't seem like a big leap at the time," Hodgson explained. "I had an idea for a book, and I applied for a grant to work on it, but was turned down. But I'd been working with an editor at Chronicle Books of San Francisco, and one day I asked her if she'd be interested in considering an illustrated novel set in Morocco. She said sure, as long as it met certain requirements. Before long, I had my first book contract." The result was *The Tattooed Map*, which appeared in 1995. By 1996 she had other contracts and could concentrate on designing her own books.

In terms of wide distribution, *No Place for a Lady: Tales of Adventurous Women Travelers* (2002), was her biggest book. It was published in the USA, France, Australia, Germany, Poland, Spain, and China after its first appearance issued by Greystone Books in Canada. "I designed all my trade books, but only the English-language editions. It is a very strange experience to see your layout with Chinese characters substituted for English."

She produced four illustrated novels, all issued first by Chronicle Books. These were *The Tattooed Map*, *The Sensualist*



Barbara Hodgson at home with her calling cards. Below, a tiny fraction of her collections.



(1998), *Hippolyte's Island* (2001), and *The Lives of Shadows* (2004). She had three single-topic science books, *The Rat: A Perverse Miscellany* (1997, first published by Greystone), *Opium: A Portrait of the Heavenly Demon* (1999, Greystone), and the follow-up *In the Arms of Morpheus: The Tragic History of Laudanum, Morphine, and Patent Medicines* (2001, Greystone). "I had

to do the last one because I had collected too much material researching the opium book, and it all cried out to be published," Hodgson said.

The most difficult to categorize are her travel-related books. There was *Paris Out of Hand: A Wayward Guide* (with Karen Elizabeth Gordon and Nick Bantock, 1996,

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Chronicle), which at first appears to be an actual guidebook, but one soon realizes is a fiction, deceptively organized by hotels, transportation, sights, and restaurants. On the other hand, *Italy Out of Hand* (2005, Chronicle), which looks very much like *Paris*, is actually nonfiction. Hodgson discovered that, at least in Italy, fact was stranger than fiction, and there was no need for invention. *No Place for a Lady* and *Dreaming of East: Western Women and the Exotic Allure of the Orient* (2005, Greystone) are straightforward social history. "Those long-ago women discovered that as Western women in exotic countries they were freer than they would have been at home. And the odd thing is that I've discovered that this is still true."

Opium and *No Place for a Lady* also evolved into exhibits for the Vancouver Museum, both co-curated by Hodgson. "For me, the exhibits have been astonishing, as they have allowed me to walk through my own books."

Hodgson is taking a break from creating illustrated trade books. "The economic climate is now less supportive of this kind of work. It takes me at least three years to research, write, illustrate, and design a book, and with printing costs increasing and book sales decreasing, it has become difficult to justify the intense labor required. And besides, with my trade books I never seem to have time to play, whereas making fine press books is almost all play!"

Her first two fine press books were published by Rollin Milroy of Heavenly Monkey. In *Good and Evil in the Garden* (2003), her ten essays about the world's most beneficial yet deadly plants – including the opium poppy, datura, and hemlock – are illustrated with wood engravings by Shinsuke Minegishi.

EXPRESSed: Ten Philatelic Fictions (2006), is a collection of stamps designed by Hodgson to promote her trade books and printed offset by Anna Banana. Brief essays describe the inspiration for the stamps.

But with her most recent book, *The Temperamental Rose and Other Ways of Seeing Colour* (2007), Hodgson rolled up her sleeves and worked on the production, though it was distributed as a Heavenly Monkey Edition, Milroy's category name for books he distributes but does not publish. [I use the past tense here inten-

tionally: all copies of the book were sold out before publication day.]

Temperamental Rose, a collaboration with bookbinder Claudia Cohen (see the September 2002 *Caxtonian* for a profile) was inspired by a discussion that resulted when Hodgson showed Cohen a collection of 19th-century French pigment vials. The pair set out to investigate historic presentations of color and to imagine others. The resulting book, printed by Vancouver photopolymer maestro David Clifford from Hodgson's electronic files, is a feast of colors, foldouts, and moveable wheels. She got her "play" by doing the hand-coloring herself. Cohen bound the thirty-copy edition in a leather and patterned paper binding of her own design.

Hodgson's next project is a portfolio of her own business cards, each one individualized with collage, painting, or its very own dustjacket. Practically all "play." After that: another volume of *Temperamental Rose*. Grass does not grow under Barbara Hodgson's shoes.

Hodgson can be contacted through Heavenly Monkey; see information under Rollin Milroy, below.

ROLLIN MILROY

Publishing was Rollin Milroy's first career, and now it is his third. After graduating with a journalism degree from Concordia University in Montreal, he worked for a large publisher of medical journals. Though he was working as an editor, he was exposed to, and fascinated by, the processes of printing and publication. From that, he moved on to what started as an editing job at American construction giant Fluor, but which led to his coordinating the bidding process for certain of their large construction projects around the world. That job involved a great deal of travel, and when he was stranded in a city over a weekend, he came to haunt bookstores as his principal form of recreation. More and more, what he found interesting were fine or private press books.

"All that time spent gave me a reasonable grounding in what had gone before, and



Rollin Milroy at work on one of his handpresses. Below, a spread from *Iskandariya*.



helped me form my own taste in press books," Milroy explained. While still employed, he took a week-long printing course from Crispin and Jan Elsted. That intensified his interest. Soon, he talked Fluor into letting him have a year off to apprentice with the Elsteds. But Fluor found it really needed him, and got him to come back for five weeks, and then into staying on for the remainder of his "year off." At the end, they presented him with an ultimatum: he must either come to work in the head office in southern California, or his job was finished.

He chose to go back into publishing full time. "It was a liberating decision. I had enjoyed my co-workers, and much of my work, but often I was in the position of being the guy who had to knock heads

together. That part I was very happy to walk away from.”

His first book, in 1998, was a miniature, *El Autobus Azul*, a collection of paper specimens he had collected while vacationing in Costa Rica. His next one, which he finished in 1999, was a large editorial project as well as a printing one: he collected all the references to Aldus’ mysterious punchcutter, Francesco Griffo de Bologna, that he was able to locate. He edited them into a book and hand-set it in 8-point Centaur, and printed it on a Kelsey tabletop platen press. I saw a copy, and I can attest that Milroy is a gifted printer to have been able to coax such beautiful printing from a Kelsey. These two books were printed under the imprint “A Lone Press.”

By 2000, Milroy’s confidence in the rightness of his decision was growing. He renamed the press Heavenly Monkey, and started the process of producing another 23 titles through today, an amazing average of nearly three books a year. An early landmark was his 2001 *Reid’s Leaves*, an expansive checklist of books from Robert Reid’s first private press. “That was too big a project for my capabilities,” he lamented. “In a way, it was good that I didn’t realize it when I started, because I never would have done it.” It is, by the way, a leaf book with many sewn and tipped-in samples, and appears in the Caxton Club checklist.

I will mention only two other of Milroy’s books that caught my eye: *The Girl With the Mask of a Crow & Other Stories*, a 2004 publication that brought the work of zine artist and writer Kara Sievewright to a dif-



Jan Kellett displays one of her miniature books. Below, Qualicum Blue.

ferent audience, and the 2007 *Iskandariya*, which combined a poem by Brigit Pegeen Kelly with etchings by Briony Morrow-Cribs. Much of his whose work can be seen online, but most of his books are long since sold out.

Milroy prints using an iron hand press. “Authenticity has nothing to do with it. I’m not interested in mastering machinery. A hand press is the simplest, most direct way to print. And now it’s what I’m comfortable printing on. What matters is how it looks when it’s finished.” One side effect is

that his press runs have always been small, typically 25 to 50 copies.

He has also started publishing a second line of books, called Heavenly Monkey Editions. These are the product of collaborations with other book artists, and on these he does more or less, as required. But what he always does is act as publisher – that is to say the person who is ultimately responsible for the marketing choices in the project. There is a lot of craft in all his books, but this “publisherness” is what sets Heavenly Monkey apart. Milroy has a well-defined audience for his books, and he thinks hard about what he publishes. “I really enjoy connecting a person whose interests I know with something they would like.”

Heavenly Monkey
www.heavenlymonkey.com
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JAN KELLETT

Jan Kellett, who publishes under the De Walden Press imprint, relishes the way her miniature book-making career has allowed her to do the wide range of creative activities she enjoys. “I enjoy doing research and writing. I like to draw and do calligraphy. I think bookbinding is really interesting. I’m pretty good at all these things; I suppose I might be better at one of them if I had settled on it and devoted my life to pursuing perfection. But I’m having a lot more fun this way.”

She’s being modest. Six of her books have won Distinguished Book Awards from the Miniature Book Society, and dozens of
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libraries – from the British Library to the Folger Shakespeare Library to the University of Melbourne – have purchased her books. Even if there may be a few better people at some of the crafts involved, Jan makes a pretty fine miniature book.

It all began with her love of calligraphy, which she discovered while she was still an English teacher. She had soon written herself a slender book, and longed to see how it could be bound, so she took a book-binding day course. She found bookbinding even more interesting, and later took further courses in binding and conservation binding, eventually hanging out her own shingle as a binder. And then, in 1996, she made her first miniature book.

It was called *The Malvern Story*; for it she researched the history of the neighborhood where she then lived with her husband, namely Malvern, Worcestershire, England. It has an elegant leather binding, marbled-paper slipcase, a number of hand-colored illustrations, and runs to 104 text pages. She decided to enter it in the Miniature Book Society annual competition, and garnered her first Distinguished Book Award. “This was far too much encouragement for a first project,” Kellett admits.

Suddenly making her own books was a lot more interesting than fixing somebody else’s worn ones. When someone came in with a conservation project that would keep her from her miniature books for a straight month, it made the situation crystal clear. It took a few years, but eventually she was able to give up her binding practice.

Her second book was also close to home. The antiquated factory that produced Morgan cars was in the neighborhood, and she was introduced to Peter Morgan, son of the founder, by then almost into his 80s but still running the firm. She persuaded him to tell her the story of the car, resulting in her second book, *Morgan*. This one did not win a Distinguished Book Award, but it did find her many grateful customers – including a priest who owned a Morgan and also collected miniature books!

1998 began Kellett’s Shakespeare period. She produced three books: two rather feminine in form (*Shakespeare’s Flowers* and *Shakespeare’s Harvest*) with jewelry-like golden clasps, and one decidedly masculine one (*Shakespeare: Man of Property*) with an unusual binding derived from some she discovered in the archives of the Shakespeare

Birthplace Trust. The binding structure has the pages folded and sewn onto small blocks made of leather and paper, with the whole laced into the cover with strips of vellum.

Since 2003, her books have come from Canada – Qualicum Beach, Vancouver Island, BC, to be exact. Her husband retired (from his business as a leather tanning chemist) and they decided to be nearer her family. (Her father is Canadian.) Qualicum Beach is a couple of hours from Vancouver by car and ferry. You’d never expect that the normal suburban-style home in which they live would house a press, but there it is, in space recaptured from the garage. She has a small platen press on which she does the printing, a larger press which looks at first glance like a miniature Albion, but which turns out to be for stamping leather and other covers, and a collection of tools for decorating leather. Many of these tools have been custom-made from her own designs.

As time has gone on, Kellett’s books have become less traditional. The 2005 *William Shakespeare’s Sonnet XVIII* has the sonnet lettered in a spiral, transferred to a polymer plate, and printed on a hexagonal piece of real sheepskin parchment that folds down into a triangular binding. Her most recent book, *Qualicum Blue*, is a two-sided foldout. It pictures natural subjects (birds, flowers, etc.) of the Qualicum area that happen to be blue or have blue features. They are illustrated with pochoir, a stencil technique. She’s having a hard time keeping up with orders for it: though the printing is finished, there is a lot of work in each binding, a dos-à-dos that puts the fold-out illustrations on one side and the text on the other.

“One time a dealer asked me why I bothered to write so much text in my books,” Kellett said. “Collectors are only going to look at the cover. Well, that’s not the way I look at it. Miniature books cannot be as encyclopedic as full-size books, but they can be a meaningful appetizer to a subject. That’s why I always include a bibliography. I whet a reader’s appetite, and they can go on



Jim Rimmer with typographic sketches. At right: Monotype machine casting type, hand-made Monotype case, using the pantograph.

for more.”

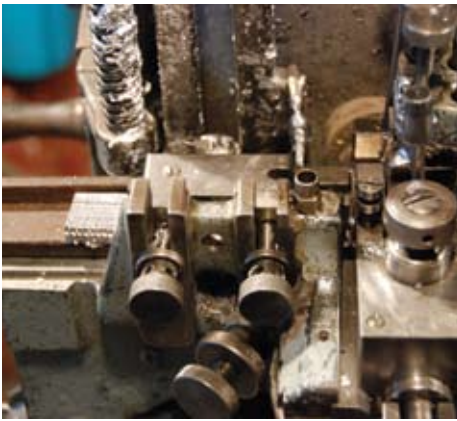
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JIM RIMMER

Jim Rimmer is a Vancouver typographer, printer, and designer. He is also one of the pieces of glue that holds the world of Vancouver fine printers together; countless times, I heard people say things like, “I had a problem, and Jim was able to fix it,” or, “I had no idea how I was going to get accents for the font, but Jim cut some for me.”

Rimmer was apprenticed to a Vancouver typographer, J. W. Boyd, in 1950. After his 6 years as an apprentice, he worked at composing another 6 years, but by then he could see the handwriting on the wall; there was no future in typography. So he went to night school to become a graphic designer, after which he worked at newspapers and design firms. He hung out his own shingle as a free-lancer in 1971, and never worked in someone else’s studio thereafter.

But metal type and letterpress printing



seeing were in books.) In fact, he even has a third pantograph in storage, a Ludlow Weibking pantograph he got from the late Paul Hayden Duensing who had, a couple of decades earlier, acquired it from the Caxton Club's own Robert Hunter Middleton, who was allowed by the Ludlow company to place them with deserving individuals. But unlike the ones Rimmer uses, the Ludlow one has no markings for setup, so it is much harder to use.

In the graphic design world, Rimmer was always good with a brush or pen, and he frequently hand-lettered logotypes or drew insignias. ("They called me a 'wrist,'" he joked.) So it was not a big step for him to design typefaces. He tried a few in the era when the Photo Typositor was the king of setting headlines (the 1960s and early 1970s), but was disappointed that they did not sell particularly well because they were not the kinds of styles then in vogue. But in the digital era he has a huge number of typefaces to his credit. P22 type house, of Buffalo, sells more than 200 of his faces, distributed through 18 type families. Many of these are revivals of classic faces (some done first for Lanston or Giampa) while others are entirely original. I have half a dozen of his adaptations in my font library, but didn't realize he had done them until I spoke with him in Vancouver.

Here again, Rimmer goes one better than type designers I have known. He has not done just digital type, but metal versions of some of his faces. When he's going to make a metal face, he first draws it by hand, then transfers it to the Ikarus program on the computer. That allows him to play with spacing and do trial settings to be sure it looks right in small sizes. He prints out outlines from the computer, and these are used to hand-cut cardboard ones. The cardboard outlines are used with the pantograph to create smaller lead matrices. A final pantograph step creates actual-size matrices in brass for use on the casters.

His most recent face, called Stern (in honor of friend and fellow typographer Chris Stern, who died unexpectedly in his 50s), is to be simultaneously released to the public in digital and metal by P22. The foundry has even made a video of Rimmer at work in his basement casting the metal. "They had a lot of fun shooting it," he said. "My workshop is close quarters, and they had to be careful not to bump their heads or get into something hot."

The big project front and center in his shop right now is his edition of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Right now all the pages of metal type are in cabinets around the room. "This one I'm having proofread four times. In the end, eleven typos were discovered in my last big book, which I consider an embarrassment. So this time I'm being as careful as I can be." The *Tom Sawyer* includes his own drawings and uses his own typeface, Hannibal Oldstyle. The type is standing and he's gotten the paper in (a cream-colored paper from Arches), so now all he's waiting for is the completion of the proofreading.

This is actually the fourth big book from his Pie Tree press. He did an edition of Dickens' *Christmas Carol* in 1998, *Shadow River: The Selected and Illustrated Poems of Pauline Johnson* in 1999, and *Leaves from the Pie Tree* (the story of his life in typography) in 2006. And in between, there have been dozens of pamphlets and broadsides for just about every book-related event in British Columbia over a span of many years.

Pie Tree Press & Type Foundry
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LUCIE LAMBERT

Lucie Lambert is an artist down to her toes. She makes etchings, serigraphs, woodcuts, and wood engravings; she does Chinese and Arabic calligraphy; she even makes jewelry. But she is an artist who believes that when art is combined with words, the result is stronger and more interesting than either could be alone. In short, Lucie Lambert publishes *livres d'artiste*. (A recent view of her work appeared in *Fine Books and Collections*, March/April 2008.)

In a way, *livres d'artiste* are the inverse of "illustrated books": the former starts with the art, the latter with the words.

This is very much a French tradition, and one she picked up from her Quebec heritage. She was born in Shawinigan, Quebec, and earned her 1975 BFA in printmaking at the University of Quebec in Montreal. She published her first *livre d'artiste* soon after graduating. It is in French, and called *Frayère* [Spawning Pool]. It is a huge portfolio, 22x30 inches, with images of logs floating in the river. Her eyes get a twinkle, "But what really excited me about it was the

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interested him all along, and he started to accumulate equipment in his basement and work/play with it in his spare time. "In 1964 I started collecting like crazy. So many people were getting rid of type and letterpress equipment. Some of it needed to be saved," he said.

He has several presses, including the very large Colt's Armory. He also has a complete Monotype setup, which lets him cast individual letters for handsetting and complete pages of text when driven by punched paper tapes. But the most unusual thing he has is a pair of pantograph machines, which allow him to engrave matrices for making new type faces. (I've seen working Monotype setups half a dozen times in my life, but the only pantographs I remember

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64 point Caslon type." She's right: the huge type manages to dominate the enormous page. Sheets of illustration pair with sheets of type. She confesses her first book is still her favorite.

Lambert worked in Quebec until 1983, when her then partner of 15 years got a job at the University of British Columbia and they moved to Vancouver. Though the relationship ended, she stayed on in Vancouver and has worked most of her career there. She has produced a total of ten books, three in Quebec and the remainder from Vancouver. But this is not to say that all the work has been done in Vancouver: Lambert collaborates on each of her productions, and the printing or bookbinding work is done in the workshops of her collaborators, wherever they are.

Take *Air*, an exquisite 1997 production. It began with Lambert's woodcuts, depictions of moving air in patterns of waves and curls. The poet Robert Melançon agreed to contribute nine poems. These were translated into English by Philip Stratford. The type is 24 point Garamond, cast by Jim Rimmer. Printing was done at the Barbarian Press, outside Vancouver. This is among the minority of her work, in that it is actually bound as a codex, rather than being a portfolio of sheets. That part was handled by Montreal master bookbinder Pierre Ouvrard, who worked with her on all her books until now, but has retired.

Two very unusual books have involved the collaboration of Japanese woodblock artist Masato Arikushi. He works in a process, called *ukiyo-e*, which – through texture on the surface of the block and unique inking techniques – manages to translate the subtlety of Japanese-style calligraphic drawing (in this case, done by Lambert) into woodblock prints. The first



Lucie Lambert with one of her early livres d'artiste. Below, illustrations from a recent book.

of these two books was *Conversations with a Toad* (1987), for which she invited Robert Bringhurst to contribute the poems. Then in 2001, she worked with Arikushi again on *Terre d'or* [Golden Earth], this time with poems by Jean-Marc Frechette and translations by Douglas Jones.

It is a curious irony that making books has turned artist Lambert into publisher Lambert. "Every artist invests huge amounts of time in creating his or her art," she explains. "But having decided to make these elaborate multiple-copy productions, involving work from many other craftsmen, I find I also have to invest substantial sums of money. It's not always easy." She was fortunate that grants from the Quebec

Ministry of Cultural Affairs allowed her to finance her first three productions. "You see, in Quebec they understand the tradition of *livres d'artiste*. But now that I have moved to the west, I fall between the stools of literature (which they understand and support) and art (which is also supported by the Canadian federal government). They don't know what to make of me." In the late 1990s, a chance meeting in a Paris gallery with scientist and businessman Robert Henon proved very lucky. His patronage has made the books starting with *Air* possible.

Lambert is at work on a new project, an alphabet book. As she currently sees it, it will have two incarnations: one will be a one-of-a-kind book with original artwork, and a second will feature spoon-printed wood engravings. She demonstrated the printing process for me. She started with a sheet previously printed in color from an earlier state of the block. She used a roller to ink the block, then hat pins to perfectly align the paper with the block. A wooden spoon was used to burnish the paper against the block; the tack of the ink kept the paper perfectly in place. She made it look easy, but it is actually only the final step of a complicated

process.

Lambert's optimism comes through when she talks. "When you take the risk to do what you want, it opens doors. People can feel your intensity. I have been lucky along the way. My life has been a story of synchronicities, states of grace – and my share of being tested." The 2007 Codex event was her most recent high point. "I saw lots of new people, made new contacts, and had the pleasure of being around other people who work as I do." She looks forward to the next one in February of 2009.

Editions Lucie Lambert
www.lucielambert.com
604-732-9389

ROBERT CHAPLIN

"Meet me at the Royal Bank of Canada at the corner of Hastings and Granville," Robert Chaplin told me. "My books are in the vault there." Having only once before had to visit a bank vault to look at books, I found this intriguing.

But in the end, the setting was not as intriguing as the "books." All of them involve words, and most have ISBN numbers, but only a very few are something the man in the street would call a book. Take *Teeny Ted From Turnip Town*. Quoting from his blog, "The book was

typeset in block letters with a resolution of 40 nanometers, and is made up of 30 micro-tablets, each carved on a polished piece of single crystalline silicon. The carving of the letterforms invokes the look of ancient cuneiform tablets.... The entire collection of micro-tablets is contained within an area of 69 x 97 microns square, with an average size of tablet being 11 x 15 microns square." The only way to read it is to use a microscope, or have a copy of his booklet with enlarged pages handy. "It was written by Malcolm Douglas Chaplin [his brother] and is a fable concerning the success of Teeny Ted from Turnip Town and his victory in the Turnip contest at the annual county fair. It is at present the world's smallest published book," he concludes, although he points out that Guinness has not yet recognized it, "as they insist the smallest book needs traditional pages and covers."

Or take *Sacred Heart of Artichoke*, a steal at \$250. Your money gets you a beautiful little 14k gold arti-

choke pin and a genuine plasticized prayer card (ISBN 978-1-894897-23-5; unfortunately, typing the ISBN into Amazon does not bring it up).

One book he does not bother to keep in the vault is *The Match Book, a Fireside Fable* (2001), of which he gave me a free copy. It is a signed first edition, but he sells copies for \$1. *Match Book* is well-traveled. If you belong to Facebook, you can see it appearing all over the Venice Biennale in a photo collection accessible from his page.

But actually, not counting his two children's books, the three items just described

are among the most book-like of his works. More typical are his "dimensional illustrations," which are small sculptures which illustrate various texts, sometimes incorporated into the art, and sometimes elsewhere. *Minushka* is a set of five Russian dolls that fit inside one another, and it contains a love poem. The outside doll is the cover, complete with title, ISBN, and copyright info; each nesting doll is a page, concluding with the last doll, on which is painted the last word.

His "Malleus Maleficarum" is a comment on the 15th Century text of the same name, which codified the official church policy for exterminating witches. This dimensional illustration is presented in the form of a very menacing hammer, with 18K gold and garnet details, carved complete with the

visage of Pan. This Estwing hammer sports horns, in place of the two prongs normally used to pry out nails, "and could be used to some considerable effect upon an inquisitor."

The Brussels Sprout Testamonial is just that, a Brussels sprout, available in either sterling or bronze. Although the edition is not limited, it has an ISBN, and the price goes up \$50 every time he sells one. It started at \$300, and today (March 14, 2008), it's \$750.

Carl Sandburg wrote "Three Stories About the Gold Buckskin Whincher" [the h is really in there] in his children's book *Rootabaga Stories*. Chaplin three-dimensionally illustrated it by creating a golden winch and calling it a "Trademark Buckskin Whincher," compounding the spelling confusion, not to mention the material confusion. This object is the physical manifestation of something, which before had been only a figment of Carl Sandburg's dreams.

I mentioned children's books. He has two. *Ten Counting Cat* is described thus on his web site: "CAT iS HAPPY BiRD iS DEAD...It's a mystery, reveiled in humour. [Yes, reveiled. And "humour" because he's Canadian.] Learn to count to ten, comprehend scientific notation, and discover the history and taxonomy of really big numbers including the googolplex and infinity." It's a handsome book, despite having been set in Palatino. The *Elephant Book* is described thus on his web site: "Contains rhymes regarding all manner of elephants, concludes in friendship, followed by a highly entertaining thesaurus. For children and adults." He also quotes his favorite review (by Canadian author Timothy Taylor) on the site: "I think Elephant is going to be big."

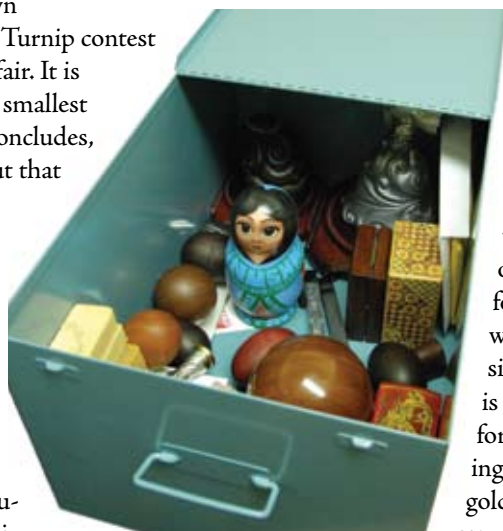
I think you've got the idea. Chaplin is very amusing and the beautiful objects he makes can be collected as sculpture, jewelry, or even as books. He's even sold a few to special-collection libraries.

Why does Chaplin keep his books in a vault? "Because I cannot afford to insure them," he says. "A bank vault is much less expensive than it would be to keep them at my studio and insure them for their full value." And besides, it intrigues the potential customers.

Robert Chaplin RCA
www.robertchaplin.ca
books@robertchaplin.ca
604-731-0148



Robert Chaplin holds "The Chicken Egg Recursion Generator," a rock crystal carving, that tells you which came first. Below, the deposit box at the bank.



JAN AND CRISPIN ELSTED

Jan and Crispin Elsted's Barbarian Press is the one that puts Vancouver on the map of fine press publishing. They moved the press to Vancouver in 1978 and have produced a staggering 38 titles, most of them substantial.

Both were born and raised in Vancouver, but they discovered the world of letterpress and fine printing when, by then married, they went to England to get their PhDs in English. It was a chance combination of events that brought about their discovery. They had friends, Harry and Frances Adaskin, who were celebrating their fiftieth anniversary. Crispin had written a poem in celebration, but they wanted it suitably printed for presentation. A friend, Graham Clark, pointed them in the direction of Graham Williams, who had a press of his own called Florin Press. "We caught him on New Year's Day, when he was nursing a hangover, and in a weak moment he agreed to print it, but only if we would help," Crispin explained. "He was an excellent teacher. He'd let you experiment on your own, to the point of letting you cock it up. Then he'd come over and ask you to say what had gone wrong." Both Crispin and Jan decided there was nothing else they ever wanted to do. They had never made anything with their hands before, and found it very satisfying.

Another extraordinary coincidence was that they happened to live a 20-minute walk from Hayle Mill, the home of Barcham Green, the legendary English hand papermaker. Before they left to return to Vancouver, they stocked up on discontinued Barcham Green papers and purchased – with Jan's father's financial help – three handpresses, in various sizes, that they use to this day.

On their return, they settled in Mission, B.C., about 60 miles east of Vancouver. "We love it out here," Jan says, "but we chose to live here to save money. It was the only place where we could afford to purchase a house with enough room to build our press." Initially, Crispin took a job teaching at the University of British Columbia. It was a long commute, but they were young and energetic.

When Crispin looks back at the early



Jan and Crispin at home. Right, type in a Barbarian drawer.

years, he remembers a 1984 edition of *A Christmas Carol* as a turning point. This was not Dickens' own text, but the script of a play based on the novel and produced without Dickens' permission, as there were no copyright laws. The author, C. Z. Barnett, had even added some incidents and characters. This was the first book for which they commissioned wood engravings, in this case by Edwina Ellis. And it was the book on whose printing Jan discovered how much she enjoyed the process of printing wood engravings. According to Crispin, a CBC television crew happened to be filming on the day the first proofs were pulled, and "the beatific expression on Jan's face was something to behold."

But it was a 1995 book which has turned out to be their *magnum opus*, at least so far. It is called *Endgrain*. "I suppose if we had realized how much work it was going to be we might not have published it," says Crispin. They approached every reputable North American wood engraver with a proposition: the engraver would lend them a favorite block (within certain prescribed dimensions) to be printed in the edition. In return, the artist would receive a copy of the finished book. They ended up with 121 engravers. They published 300 copies (of which 50 were deluxe) in addition to the



copies for the engravers. The edition was fully subscribed before it was finished, and on the market copies now sell for five or more times their original price. On top of all that, it is a very beautiful book.

It has spawned an ongoing series, called "Endgrain Editions," which showcases the work of individual artists. They've done three so far, by Gerard Brender à Brandis, Abigail Rorer, and Peter Lazarov.

Barbarian Press has a more coherent plan for its publishing than some presses manage. Aside from a few typographic experiments, which serve as a break between major books, their offerings fall into one of three categories: new poetry, literary texts, and wood engraving. (Of course, sometimes wood engravings are used to illustrate books in the other two categories.) There's more scholarship involved with the literary texts, which makes them more time-consuming.

Their most recent project is a literary

See VANCOUVER, page 16

Wilkie Collins in America

A review of the new book by Caxtonian Susan Hanes

Susan R. Hanes. *Wilkie Collins's American Tour, 1873-4*. Pickering & Chatto, 2008. \$99.

Reviewed by William Baker

There have been studies of the activities of a few major Victorian writers during their visits to North America. The two best known are William Makepeace Thackeray and Charles Dickens. In the preface to her excellent monograph, *Wilkie Collins's American Tour, 1873-4*, Susan Hanes draws attention to frequently forgotten facts. Thackeray and Dickens were accompanied on their tours by faithful companions who documented almost their every move. George Dolby went with Dickens and records his American ventures in *Dickens as I Knew Him* (1885). Thackeray traveled with "Eyre Crowe who, as an artist and amanuensis, detailed their trip in *With Thackeray in America*" published in 1893. Dolby's and Crowe's accounts "significantly facilitated" subsequent accounts as did the later publication of Thackeray's and Dickens's voluminous correspondence.

Wilkie Collins had no such luck. His godson Frank Ward traveled with him for part of his 1873-1874 North American adventure. If Ward kept a record it just disappeared. Clyde K. Hyder's *Wilkie Collins in America: Studies in English in Honor of Raphael Dorman O'Leary and Seldon Lincoln Whitcomb*, published at Lawrence, Kansas, as long ago as 1940, draws on some contemporary newspaper reports of Collins's readings during his six month tour. Hyder's is the first, and until Susan R. Hanes's book, the only, account of Wilkie Collins's September 1873 until March 1874 tour in the New World.

The tour was unexpectedly cut short by several weeks. Wilkie Collins wrote to his old friend Charles Ward "The Times are bad. There is nothing very profitable to be done – and I want to be home again." Susan Hanes's fascinating account of Wilkie Collins's reading tour was made possible by the 1999 and 2005 publication of *The Letters of Wilkie Collins* and *The Public Face of Wilkie Collins: The Collected Letters*. In addition, Hanes has scoured, in innumerable American and Canadian sources, newspaper accounts of the tour and reviews of Collins's

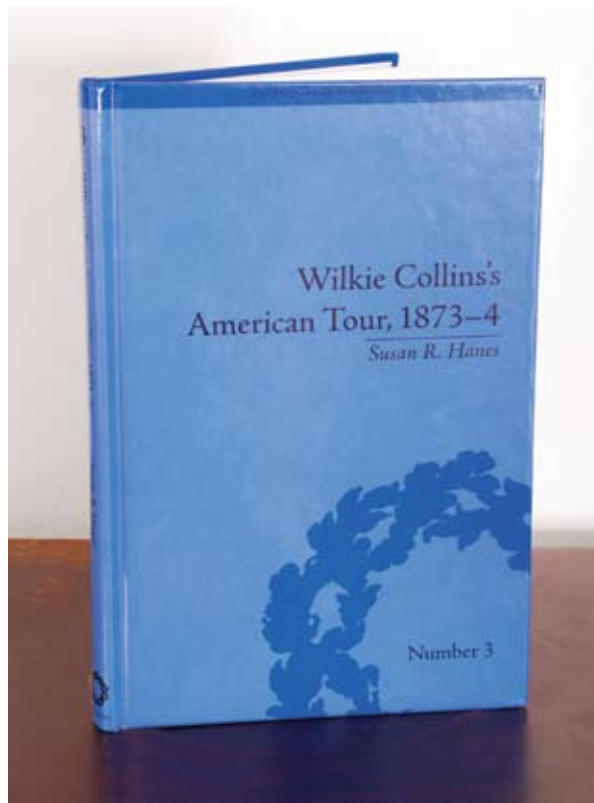
public readings. Further, she has used her own discoveries of hitherto unpublished Collins's letters and visited the places he visited. It is a pity that her publishers were unable, probably due to expense, to reproduce extensive illustrations of some of the places he and Susan Hanes visited. Some are reproduced, for instance the Rossin House Hotel in Toronto where he stayed just after Christmas 1873, and the Printing House at the Wallingford Oneida Community, visited by Collins early in March 1874.

Hanes confirms 25 readings by Collins in 22 locations. Collins was in North America for a total of 154 days. He used New York and Boston as a base and traveled to towns nearby, to Philadelphia, to upstate New York, into Canada, to Chicago, to Washington D.C. There was even talk of a possible trip to San Francisco. "His first circuit encompassed Troy, Utica, and Syracuse. His second was through Baltimore and Washington. His third was to Montreal, Toronto, Niagara and Buffalo, and the final circuit was west to Cleveland, Sandusky, Toledo, Detroit and Chicago."

There are five very helpful appendices. The first provides a synopsis of Wilkie Collins reading his supernatural story "The Dream Woman" (first published in the extra Christmas number of *Household Words* for December 1855), which he enlarged for his American tour. The second is a very useful dated tabular record of his performances and brief reactions to them. The third, by days and dates, provides an

account of his itinerary. The fourth is an alphabetically arranged listing of attendees at the New York Lotos Club Dinner on 29 September 1873 and the New York Centenary Club Dinner on 1 October 1873 given in his honor. The final Appendix is devoted to "Press Portraits" recorded in contemporary newspapers of descriptions of Collins, his size, his beard, whom he resembled, his manner, and qualities as a reader.

Financially, compared with the sums made by Dickens and Thackeray from their American tours Collins's can be considered a failure. He believed that his sponsors cheated him. Creatively Collins's visit sparked the writing of *The Dead Alive* (1873-1874), his thriller based on a wrongful conviction case. It was reprinted in 2005 with an introduction by Rob Warden



and a foreword by Scott Turow. His 1879 novel *The Fallen Leaves* is based upon his visit to the Utopian Colony in Wallingford, Connecticut, a visit discovered by Susan Hanes. The American visit also influenced *The Guilty River* (1886), *The Two Destinies: A Romance* (1876), and the unfinished *Blind Love* (1889), completed after Collins's death by Walter Besant. In 1885 Collins even contemplated writing an American historic drama with the great American actress Mary Anderson in the leading role.

Wilkie Collins's American Tour, 1873-4 is replete with fascinating details. Engagingly written, it is an important addition to our biographic knowledge of Wilkie Collins, to the efforts of an important Victorian author to attract and to please his audience, and to

See WILKIE COLLINS, page 16
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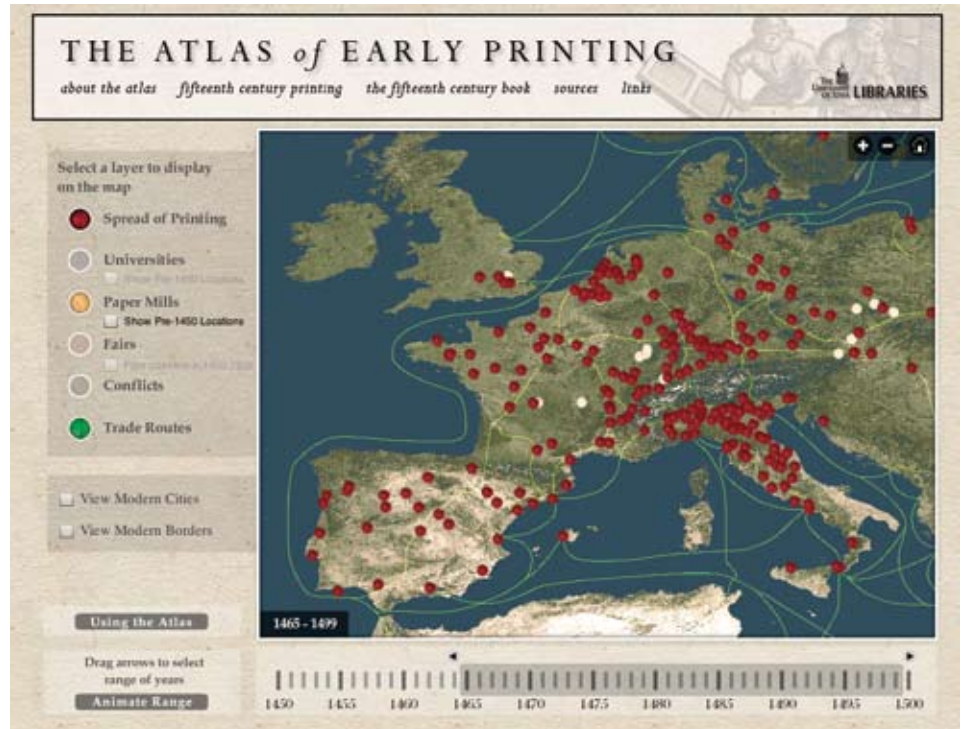
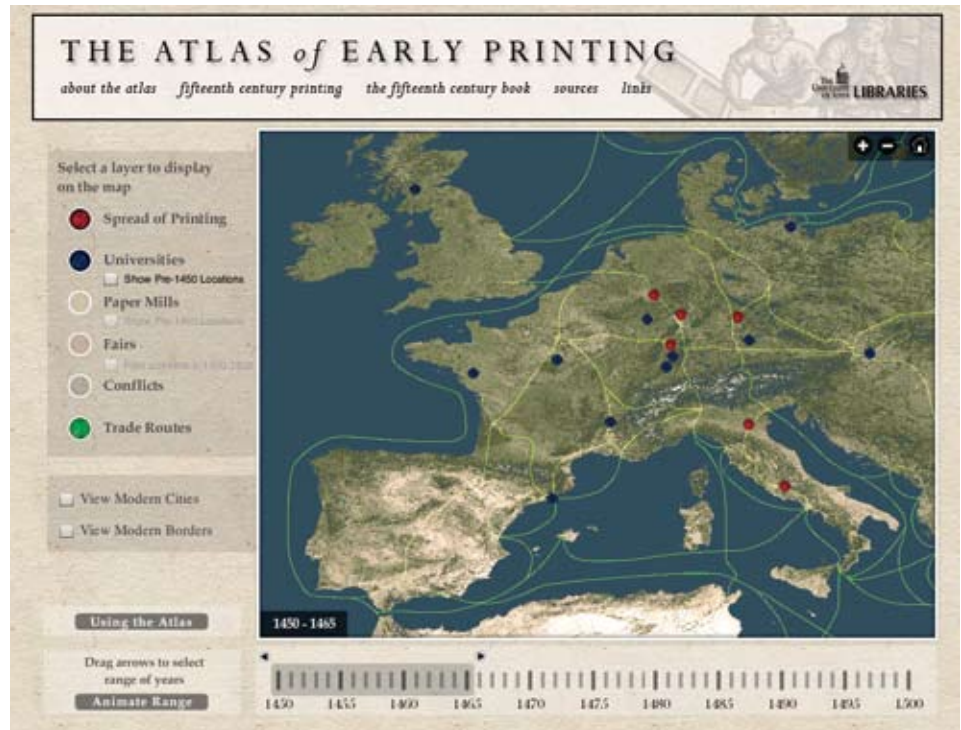
The Atlas of Early Printing

Martha Jameson

No, it's not a book, but a website (<http://atlas.lib.uiowa.edu/>), conceived and developed by Caxtonian Greg Prickman ('99) of the Special Collections Library, University of Iowa Libraries. The Atlas of Early Printing is an interactive site designed to be used as a tool for teaching the early history of printing in Europe during the second half of the fifteenth century. While printing in Asia pre-dates European activity by several hundred years, notes Prickman, the rapid expansion of the trade following the discovery of printing in Mainz, Germany, around the middle of the fifteenth century is a topic of great importance to the history of European civilization. This website, hosted by the University of Iowa Libraries, utilizes Flash technology to depict the spread of European printing in a manner that allows a user to control dates and other variables.

The inspiration for the site comes from the maps of printing's spread, as found in Berry and Pool's 1966 book *The Annals of Printing*, and the well-known maps in Febvre and Martin's *L'apparition du livre* (*The Coming of the Book*) from 1958. These sources, and others such as Robert Teichl's map *Die Wiegendruck in Kartenbild*, depict the spread of printing in Europe largely through a decade-by-decade progression. The aim of the Atlas of Early Printing is to take this type of information and allow it to be manipulated, while also providing contextual information that visually represents the cultural situation from which printing emerged. Layers can be turned on and off to build a detailed atlas of the culture and commerce of Europe as masters and journeymen printers ventured to new towns and markets seeking support and material for the new art of printing.

According to Prickman, the Atlas of Early Printing was developed with an Innovations in Instructional Computing grant from the Academic Technologies Advisory Committee at the university, which is essentially a way of distributing a portion of campus computing fees to projects that will improve classroom instruction. In keeping with the spirit of the grant, the website is primarily intended for instruc-



Above: printing establishments and universities 1450-1465, below: printing establishments and paper makers, 1465-1499.

tion to provide a resource for classes where printing, European culture, the Renaissance, etc., are being discussed. The grant allowed Prickman to hire graduate students to undertake the research necessary to establish accurate dates and locations for all of the historical information, as well as another set of students from the geography

department to do the GIS (Geographic Information System) work needed to construct coordinates for the map. The highly specialized work of programming the site in Flash was done by the university's Academic Technologies unit, which also created the 3D model of a printing press that is viewable on the site using a software



package called Maya. The data was stored in Excel spreadsheets which were exported to XML files, which Flash uses to render the site.

The historical and bibliographical information was gathered from a wide variety of sources, starting with some general lists of the spread of printing from books like Colin Clair's *A History of European Printing*. But as the project progressed, the team quickly delved fairly deep into the standard sources for incunabula, such as the *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* (ISTC) at the British Library, the *Catalogue of Books Printed in the XVth Century Now in the British Museum*, the *Gesamtkatalog*, etc. The site uses the online ISTC as the default for providing current scholarship regarding dates and attribution, and each book listed on the map contains the ISTC number for quick reference to fuller bibliographic information. But in many cases the printed sources are still better with context and detail.

Prickman first came up with the idea of creating such a website over ten years ago, when he was a library science student at Indiana University and working at the Lilly

Library. As he was learning about the history of printing, Prickman came upon the maps of the spread of printing in Febvre and Martin's *The Coming of the Book*. Prickman notes, "The maps that really captivated me, though, were the series of detailed views in William Turner Berry and H. Edmund Poole's *Annals of Printing*. Berry and Poole broke the maps up by region, making it possible to view year by year how printing spread. And yet, the overview maps were still organized by decade. Beyond that, it was the issues raised by the placement of the spread of printing within a social and cultural context that particularly intrigued me. The maps were static, and I found myself wondering what else was going on, not just in general historical terms, but specifically – where were the centers of learning? Of religion? Of trade?"

A few years later, Prickman began compiling a list of towns and printers by date, with the vague notion that he could do something like create a separate map for each of the fifty years of the incunabula period and display them online as a sort of animation, one after the other. But, he says, "this would have been an extremely time-

consuming endeavor, though, and I quickly abandoned that approach. It wasn't until quite a few years later that I found myself at the University of Iowa in an environment that was right for exploring the idea, and at a time when the tools for creating an interactive site like this had advanced to a point where it was feasible."

Asked his views on using an emerging 21st-century technology to analyze the spread of an earlier technological innovation, Prickman responds, "Using an emerging technology to study an earlier technology is the kind of thing that could be turned into all kinds of metaphors, but I tend to resist that kind of comparison, because I feel it ultimately tells us very little about either technology. An interactive online map is simply a new way of presenting geographic, and in this case historical, information. The basic elements of the presentation are not new, and the fact that they have been adapted to a new medium is just the latest instance of the ongoing transition of information to new formats. If anything, my hope is that the technology of the site is invisible, and it will simply be viewed as a useful tool for learning and research." He adds, "Digitizing a collection of fifteenth century printed books is beneficial, important, and worthwhile, but in the end we are simply making yet another facsimile of an already tangible thing. To me, the Atlas is a resource that interprets and illuminates broader historical questions, in a way that only makes sense in reference to the actual artifacts it is focused on – the books. It's the real physicality and historical legacy of the books as artifacts that makes a project like this even possible."

§§

Club Notes

Membership Report, April 2008

1. Newly elected members:

Debra Yates' childhood fascination with *The Wizard of Oz* led to her adult interest in fiction, especially to themes of imposing personalities and questions of power. She shared this interest with her late husband, Judge Stephen Yates, whom she met in law school. The result is a lifetime collection rich in 19th century novels, historical biographies, specialized Americana, and writings on both political realities and the ideals

of public service. Nominated by Susan Pezzino, seconded by Bill Locke.

Donald R. Allen is entering his third career, after twenty years in advertising and thirty-three as CEO of Sigma Companies, specialists in mergers and acquisitions. Allen has been the subject of feature articles in the *Wall Street Journal* and *Chicago Sun-Times*, appeared on the News Hour with Jim Leher, and published articles in numerous periodicals. His serious interest in books goes back to student days working in the document room at Miami University; since then, he has visited libraries world-

wide. His life-long love for the printed word has led to new career as literary agent. Nominated by John Chalmers, seconded by Charles Miner.

2. Consider inviting a guest to one of the spring luncheon or dinner meetings. Or if there is someone you think would be an enjoyable member of our conversational circle, provide me with a name and contact information; I will send them information on the Club.

Dan "Skip" Landt, Membership Chair,
skiplandt@sbcglobal.net, 773-604-4115.

Book and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by Bernice E. Gallagher

(Note: on occasion an exhibit may be delayed or extended; it is always wise to call in advance of a visit)

2008 Printers Row Book Fair (featuring new, used and antiquarian books, more than 190 booksellers from across the nation, and annual crowds of close to 100,000 book lovers) on historic Printers Row, Dearborn St. between Congress and Polk, Chicago; see also www.printersrowbookfair.org (June 7 and 8).

“Improvisations: Picture Books by Chris Raschka” (picture-book art that highlights American musicians, poets and storytellers,) in Galleries 15 and 16 at the Art Institute of Chicago, 111 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago 312-443-3600 (closes June 8).

“The Arranged Flower: Ikebana and Flora in Japanese Prints” (includes limited-edition surimono, privately published prints that present complex representations of flowers replete with symbolic and poetic connotations, as well as printed botanical encyclopedias) in Gallery 107 at the Art Institute of Chicago, 111 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago 312-443-3600 (through August 3).

“Graphic Thought Facility:

Resourceful Design” (the first exhibition at the Art Institute devoted to the work of a single design firm, including GTF book designs for monographs, catalogues and retail stores) in Gallery 24 at the Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago 312-443-3600 (through August 17).

“Discover Hidden Archives Treasures” (recently uncovered treasures in the Special Collections archives, including pamphlets about Chicago child welfare, letters of Irish Nationalist O’Gorman Mahon, and selections from the Chicago Jazz Archive) in the Alcove Gallery of the Special Collections Research Center, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, 1100 East 57th Street, Chicago 773-702-8705 (through June 14).

“The Spirit of the Orient and Judaism: from the Ludwig Rosenberger Library of Judaica” (examines works that illustrate how Western Jews shaped their own identities through real and imaginary encounters with the Orient) in the Rosenberger Library of Judaica Gallery of the Special Collections Research Center, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, 1100 East 57th Street, Chicago 773-702-8705 (closes June 20).

“Sister Arts: Poetry and Music” (celebrates these intimately related and reciprocal art forms, with a sampling of works from the Regenstein collections) in the 3rd floor Reading Room of the Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, 1100 East 57th Street, Chicago 773-702-8705 (through June 30).

“Images of Jewish Prayer, Politics, and Everyday Life from the Branka and Harry Sondheim Jewish Heritage Collection” (includes books, prints and works of art that focus on visual representations of Jewish life and customs, including works by artists Alphonse Levy, Moritz Oppenheim and Arthur Szyk) in the Main Gallery of the Special Collections Research Center,

Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, 1100 East 57th Street, Chicago 773-702-8705 (through July 8).

“Life Turns on Two Wheels” (explores the development of two-wheel vehicles, from chariots to Segways, including books, posters, late nineteenth/early twentieth century bicycle maps, Africana) in the Main Exhibit Space at the Northwestern University Library, 1970 Campus Drive, Evanston 847-467-5918 (closes June 26).

“Exploration 2008: The Chicago Calligraphy Collective’s Annual Juried Exhibition” (promoting the study, practice, and appreciation of calligraphy, exhibit includes handmade artists’ books and broadsides as well as three-dimensional works executed in various media and styles, from classical to contemporary) in the Herman Dunlap Smith Gallery at the Newberry Library, 60 West Walton Street, Chicago 312-255-3700 (through July 11).

“24th Annual Book Fair” (includes more than 100,000 donated books in over sixty categories, on subjects ranging from antiques to zoology) at the Newberry Library, 60 West Walton Street, Chicago 312-255-3556 (July 24 through July 27).

“From Prairie to Field: Photographs by Terry Evans” (internationally recognized photographer presents exquisite photographs, using Iris technology, documenting the variety of prairie life in the Field Museum’s scientific collection) at the Field Museum Library, 1400 South Lake Shore Drive, Chicago 312-665-7892 (through July 27).

“Temple of Flora” (features an exceedingly rare book, published between 1799

and 1807 and considered the most famous of all florilegia, along with a host of others written by London physician Robert John Thornton, all prized for their beautifully crafted and highly romantic illustrations) in the Lenhardt Library at the Chicago Botanic Garden, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe 847-835-8202 (through August 17).

“The Fanciful and Fascinating Insect World” (includes artwork and rare books from the Morton Arboretum’s library and illustrates how insects have fueled the human imagination) in the Sterling Morton Library at the Morton Arboretum, 4100 Illinois Route 53, Lisle 630-719-2430 (through August 25).

“Imaginary Coordinates” (explores issues of national identity, borders, and the critical disparity between maps and experience by juxtaposing antique, modern and contemporary maps of the Holy Land) at the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies, 610 South Michigan, Chicago 312-322-1700 (through September 7).

“Fun for All! Chicago’s Amusement Parks” (draws on materials from the Library’s collections and explores the development of the amusement park in Chicago, from the late 19th century to the present) in the Special Collections Exhibit Hall, 9th Floor, Harold Washington Library Center at the Chicago Public Library, 400 South State Street, Chicago 312-747-4300 (through September 14).

“Priests for Peace: The Nonviolent Roots of 1968 Protests” (includes items from the collection of Daniel Berrigan – Jesuit priest, social activist, author of nonfiction and poetry – and features works annotated by Berrigan while in prison as well as copies of works by Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hahn) in Special Collections and Archives, Room 314, at DePaul University’s John T. Richardson Library, 2350 N. Kenmore Avenue, Chicago 773-325-2167 (through November 1).

Bernice Gallagher will be happy to receive your listings at either 847-234-5255 or gallagher@lakeforest.edu.



Graphic Thought Facility at the Art Institute
DESIGN MUSEUM CAFE GRAPHICS, 2003

Caxtonians Collect: Betty Jane Wagner

Forty-second in a series of interviews with members

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

The Club directory says Betty Jane Wagner joined the Caxton Club in 2003. That is technically accurate, but it entirely misrepresents her years of association with the Club, because she had been attending for many years previous as the spouse of Durrett Wagner, who joined in 1971 and remained a member until he died in late 2001. She continued to attend after his death, and formalized the relationship by joining herself in 2003. (Durrett Wagner will be remembered by many as the proprietor of the Swallow Press from 1967 until he sold it to Ohio University Press in 1980.)

She does not describe herself as a book collector, but she has spent a lifetime involved with books and reading. She grew up in Ft. Morgan, Colorado, and attended Colorado Woman's College and Baylor University, where she met

Durrett Wagner. She spent three years as a public school teacher in New Haven, Connecticut, but soon moved on to teaching teachers of English. Her longest stint was at the National College of Education (now National-Louis University), but she moved to Roosevelt University for her final years of teaching, 1997 through 2005. She earned a master's at Yale and a doctorate at the University of Illinois at Chicago in rhetoric and composition.

Trying to discover and disseminate creative approaches to teaching word skills – in particular, writing – has filled Wagner's professional life. "Five paragraph themes and topic sentences are not very good at teaching people to write," she says. "An effective teacher of writing has to begin by having a caring, responsible dialog with students. She must listen to what they have to say and help them to express it." And too much emphasis on mechanics can be counterproductive. "If a child is mainly

concerned about spelling, she will write 'dog' rather than 'dachshund' and thus miss a specific, vivid image." Checking spelling can come after the writing.

Wagner has published many articles and books. She mentioned two books that were the result of encounters with other



teachers with unusual approaches. "I met a young woman who taught writing, using drama. She was tremendously effective. I wanted to figure out why, so I wrote a book about her methods." The result was *Dorothy Heathcote: Drama as a Learning Medium*, published in 1976 and revised in 1999. It was so influential that it has gone through several printings and has been translated into Swedish. She got involved with the late theorist James Moffett by sending him a response to one of his books, asking why he didn't have more examples of the application of his theories to younger students. "He wrote back suggesting I should write the part about younger students myself. So I became the co-author of *Student-Centered Language Arts, K-12*, which we kept up to date with three new editions."

In 1979, Wagner co-founded the Chicago Area Writing Project, continuing as its director until 2003. It's currently headquartered at the University of Illinois at Chicago,

but it relies on grants and individual contributions to keep it going. "The main thing we do is provide summer courses for teachers to not only refresh their skills in teaching writing, but to provide a transformative experience through writing and printing a book of the group's own writing." Though she's no longer an official of the project, she admitted that reunion meetings still take place at her apartment.

Her apartment is in Evanston. She shares it with her husband, Harold Kimball, whom she married in 2005. She had three children from her previous marriage, and he had four, so there is plenty of family to keep track of.

To fill her spare time since retirement, Wagner is at work on a novel. It's about the relocation of the Japanese during World War II, and it's intended for a pre-teen audience. "In part I'm writing from my own

experience," she explained. "When I was a child we lived in a largely homogeneous German community in Colorado. Suddenly we had these Japanese children in our state. I didn't really understand it at the time, but it must have been a cataclysmic experience for them."

And if you press her, Wagner admits that she stays involved with teaching teachers of English. For example, an upcoming National Council of Teachers of English convention will include an all-day session, led by her, about what a classroom would be like if it followed Moffett instructional strategies.

Somehow, she also manages to travel with her husband (they're just back from El Salvador; he was a civil engineer whose career included work in several foreign countries), attend theater and movies, and worry about the future of poetry in our culture. "It's so hard for a young poet to get

See BETTY JANE WAGNER, page 16

CAXTONIAN, MAY 2008

photograph by Robert McCamant

Bookmarks...

Luncheon Program

Friday, June 13, 2008, Women's Athletic Club

Hayward Blake Interviewed by Junie Sinson

"From the Shores of Utah Beach to the Halls of Graphic Design"

Two well known Caxtonians will present a program of note. Hayward Blake (Past President, Honorary Member, and graphic artist/book designer) will be interviewed by Junie Sinson (Past President and attorney) about his eventful life. Topics will include Hayward's career as an enlisted man in the U.S. Signal Corps (39th Battalion, Communications) in the European theater during WWII; meeting and marrying (while in France) his life companion, Simone, a young woman from Marseilles; his study of graphic design at prestigious American schools in Chicago, Pittsburgh and Cambridge; and his adult occupation as an outstanding graphic artist and book designer. A question that will be considered: how did a 17-year-old Signal Corps draftee (1943), who participated in one of America's and the world's most significant military engagements, develop into the artist-man?

Do be there.

The June luncheon meeting will take place at the Women's Athletic Club, 626 N. Michigan Avenue. (Enter on Ontario; go to the 4th floor.) Luncheon buffet opens at 11:30; program 12:30-1:30. Luncheon is \$29. The June dinner meeting will take place at the Fortnightly Club, 120 E. Bellevue Pl. (just West of inner Lake Shore Drive). Dinner timing: spirits at 5 pm, dinner at 6 pm,

Dinner Program

Wednesday, June 18, 2008, the Fortnightly Club

Michele Cloonan

"The Brilliant Career of Alice Millard in Chicago and Los Angeles"

Chicagoan Alice Parsons Millard studied art in London in the late 1890s. Upon her return to Chicago, she went to McClurg's Bookstore to purchase books on Pre-Raphaelite painters. She found more than she was looking for when she met George Madison Millard, who presided over the Saints and Sinners Corner. Soon the two were traveling to Europe together where they visited their friends the William Morris and T.J. Cobden-Sanderson families. After their marriage, another friend, Frank Lloyd Wright, designed a house for them in Highland Park.

By the time Alice died in Pasadena in 1938, she was perhaps the foremost female antiquarian bookseller in America, selling to Estelle Doheny and William Andrews Clark, Jr. But her life was beset by personal tragedy and financial woe. Building her second Wright house, this time in Pasadena, nearly bankrupted her.

Caxtonian Michele Cloonan is dean of the Graduate School of Library & Information Science of Simmons College, Boston.

program at 7:30 pm. Price for dinner is \$60. For reservations call 312-255-3710 or email caxtonclub@newberry.org; **reservations are needed by noon Wednesday for the Friday Luncheon, and by noon Monday for the Wednesday dinner.** See www.caxtonclub.org for parking and transit information.

WILKIE COLLINS, from page 11

the study of 19th-century Anglo-American literary relations. It also reveals much about a certain portion of North America in the decade after the Civil War.

Collins dedicated the 1873 Harper & Brothers 17-volume Illustrated Library Edition of his novels to "The American

People." He wrote to George W. Childs, the Philadelphia publisher, as he sailed home for Liverpool on 16 March 1874: "I leave you with a grateful heart – with recollections of American kindness and hospitality which will be, as long as I live, among the happiest recollections to which I can look back." To discover more, to find out why, for instance,

he was so anxious to visit Jane Bigelow, the wife of the politician and diplomat John Bigelow, at their home, "The Squirrels" at Highland Falls overlooking the Hudson River, a reading of Susan Hanes's splendid book is a must.

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BETTY JANE WAGNER, from page 15

published these days. And then the English faculty that teaches now too often has its mind on such tiny topics. Scholars feel they have to pick an obscure subject and become its master just to get a doctorate and get published. We need more brave souls like Peter Stanlis who dare to illumine our major poet Robert Frost with new eyes."

§§

VANCOUVER, from page 10

text: Shakespeare's *Pericles*, in an edition newly edited by Crispin and with wood engravings by Simon Brett. It's in the press now, and pages of type sit all around their shop, awaiting printing or distribution. Soon, they hope to do *Twelfth Night* with engravings by Barry Moser, and then Ovid's *Metamorphoses*...

While there can of course be strains in running a business as a couple, Jan and Crispin seem remarkably happy in their

chosen work. "What makes us happiest," says Jan, "is when we can both be in the press, Crispin working on setting, and me printing. The one thing we don't do together is cut paper: we have totally different approaches, and drive each other crazy."

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Photographs by the author.