

# BIBLIOGRAPHICA

*Editor's Note:* In spite of a number of obstacles, we've reached the last issue of the first year of Bibliographica. First and foremost, we would like to thank all of our subscribers and all of the people who have written for us; we also appreciate the many supportive e-mails we have received, without which we would have succumbed to the fear that Bibliographica is a waste of time. We are already looking forward to next year, when we hope to bring you more introductions to printers and an issue devoted to collectors and collecting as well as lots of news and reviews.

However, to keep Bibliographica going, we've made the decision to change our format. In order to continue printing out, photocopying, and mailing each issue to our subscribers, we would have to start charging a small subscription fee in order to cover costs. In keeping with our desire to disseminate this newsletter for free, we thought it best to pursue an online, open-access model for the coming year. Starting with the Winter 2006 issue, subscribers will receive an e-mail notification of publication and a link to a PDF file; subscribers are free to read the issue online or print it out. We haven't worked out all of the details, but our plan is to deposit each issue of Bibliographica in an open access repository. This will have the added benefit of making all back issues readily available online and increase the possibility that fine printing fans searching online will stumble upon, and read, the work of our writers. If/when there are physical goodies to be distributed, these will be sent out to our subscribers via the postal service.

This is something of a round-up issue with reviews of a few titles that have come to our collective attention. As a little treat, we also include something that Kira helped to print while visiting Graham & Kathy at Incline Press. As always, we are actively seeking articles, notices, or reviews – if you would like to write something for a future Bibliographica, please e-mail us at [aeoluspress@yahoo.com](mailto:aeoluspress@yahoo.com). We also welcome comments & letters from our readers.



## Private Press People

By Sarah Vickers

I'm sitting here in front of the computer staring at a blank screen and wondering what on earth I can write about printing...it's never been a great interest of mine, it probably never will be. I admire the work and I can understand why there are people who try to keep this tradition alive but I must admit that for me, the world of Private Presses does not ignite any enthusiasm.

I am not interested in the books, the machines, the typesetting, the binding or anything else to do with

the work of a Private Press and I have always put this down to being part of a younger generation. However, I have been proved very wrong! It turns out that there are many young people out there who are itching to get their hands stuck into old type and ink. Gwasg Gregynog now runs a studentship scheme with the University of East London; we have two students once a year for two weeks. Their enthusiasm has amazed me as I didn't think it possible that anyone could be so eager to spend two weeks in a printing press in Wales—I wish it were an exchange scheme and I could spend two weeks in London! As well as this, there are many other young people I've met who are very interested in the work

of typesetting and printing—they cannot afford, as many people cannot, to spend a lot of money on buying the books but they are more than willing to try making them and I think this should be the main focus in the Private Press world. We don't remember the days when everything was printed in this way so how can we be expected to develop a great desire to purchase when we don't understand the work involved?

The other thing I'm not interested in is the long hours spent standing at tables in exhibitions—it can be boring, it can be tiring and it can seem very pointless at times. I do not look forward to the packing and unpacking either, before and after exhibitions, but before you start thinking I hate my job I'll tell you about the silver lining to exhibitions...you meet lots of very interesting and, more often than not, genuine people.

I am not interested in the work of Private Presses but I do like the people of Private Presses. It seems to attract a very 'easy to get on with' bunch of people. I've had some very interesting talks with people I've met through working at Gwasg Gregynog and I like seeing the same faces who, unlike in a lot of circles, actually remember who you are!

I didn't attend the Oak Knoll Fest this year and I was surprised that I missed not seeing those people I had got to know. As you will have guessed by now, I didn't miss the long day behind a table, I didn't miss having to seem interested in what I was exhibiting but I did miss the friendly and relaxing atmosphere, the welcome and the good company of friendly and genuine people.

One of my main interests is travel and all that it involves. I find that travelling opens the mind, broadens horizons and, if it were a qualification, would be a 'must-have' on every CV. I enjoy meeting the people at exhibitions – they have, and still are, really living life. They have busy and active lives, they are working at a slower pace and therefore are able to take the time to really enjoy and notice the things that really matter in life. They are creative and thinking people and this always makes for an interesting conversation.

So, as you can see I still have not written anything about printing – it does not interest me – but I have found two other subjects to write about which play an extremely important part in the life of any Private Press: the 'hands-on' involvement of the very interested and forward thinking younger generation and the 'easy to get on with' attitude and relaxed atmosphere of the Private Press People. If these are not appreciated and fed, the tradition which has been kept alive for so long will, without doubt, die.



## Correspondence

To the Editors of *Bibliographica*

This letter is a response to the brief note on the Kat Ran Press Ephemera Club written by John Russell. I have nothing to say about the Ephemera Club itself as I am unfamiliar with it, but I would like to take the opportunity to address the issue of collectors and affordable books that was raised in the article.

It seems to me that there are two camps in the fine press world: artists and craftspeople. The artists make expensive books in short runs (items are almost always over \$500 with around 50 printed); the craftspeople make less expensive books in generally longer runs (\$100-\$300 generally with print runs over 100). The two camps have very different audiences and thus have to think about their collecting base according to their potential (and actual) constituencies. While Mr. Russell's admiration for "gateway objects" as a way of building one's collector base has a pleasant ring to it, the cold logic of business and survival in the printing world works in other, less mysterious ways.

Inexpensive ephemeral items might provide a printer with some sales at a generic art fair, but they will not somehow trick novices into becoming collectors. People who can afford the high-end books offered in the trade will not be seduced by cheap materials: they will buy expensive books in large part because they are expensive. Part of the glamour

of buying fine press books for these collectors is the fact that they are rare & precious and priced accordingly. Novice collectors who might be seduced by inexpensive ephemera will be looking to buy the more inexpensive pamphlets & books anyway and a printer can work directly on selling such materials rather than wasting time, effort, and money on ephemeral items.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to express my views in this matter. I very much appreciate the work required in providing the fine printing community with another interesting publication.

Cheers,

Minerva ("Minnie") Connolly



Wendell Berry. *The Farm: A Poem*. Printed and Designed by Bob Baris with illustrations by Wesley Bates. Press on Scroll Road, 2005.

Reviewed by Morag MacLean

Wendell Berry is something of an anomaly among environmentalists. An excellent poet and essayist, Berry is rooted in the soil of the Midwest where he farms as well as rooted in the Christian tradition. I've met a lot of environmental types who have been anarchists, socialists, or Gaia/Earth Mother spiritualists, but never one as unabashedly Biblical as Berry. This is too bad, as Berry's worldview is rich and nourishing and his writings are wonderfully organic: they spring from honest reflection on life and are welcoming rather than scolding or condescending.

Bob Baris and his Press on Scroll Road seem very much in tune with Wendell Berry; *The Farm* is, I believe, the second work by Berry that the Press has produced. I have long admired the Press's books for their clean simplicity. Mr. Baris produces texts that are delightful to read not just because of the content, but because the design is so well executed. The color of the pages is warm but not too dark and the

typefaces chosen are easy on the eyes: these are books to relax with, like a fine wine. *The Farm* continues the Press's tradition of excellent craftsmanship; this is a book that I will gladly revisit over the years.



Mary Swander. *Crazy Eddy on the Judgment Day*. Printed and illustrated by Julie Russell-Steuart. Gladbrook, Iowa: Caveworks Press, 2004.

Reviewed by Skye Hardesty

Printer and artist Julie Russell-Steuart produces chapbooks, broadsides, and artist's books through her imprint, Caveworks Press (see *Bibliographica* issue 2 for more information on Ms. Russell-Steuart and her press). *Crazy Eddy on the Judgment Day*, one of two works produced by the press so far, is a chapbook set in Garamond and Engraver's Shaded type and printed on Mohawk Superfine with four linoleum cut illustrations. The unusual binding, described as "Fraser covers" in the colophon, can best be described as two half paper covers sewn together through a small fold creating two separate signatures. A linoleum cut illustration of hills and stormy skies graces the goldenrod paper cover.

In keeping with the location of her press, the printer chose an excerpt from a forthcoming "narrative poem:" *The Girls on the Roof* by Iowa poet Mary Swander. Unfamiliar with Swander's work, I've read her poetry described as "autobiographical poetry...rooted in religious faith and rural life. [Swander's] verses speak of natural wonders, of learning from the land, and of the people who live and work on the land" (Contemporary Authors, "Mary Swander"). The story of *The Girls on the Roof* centers on the 1993 flood of Pompeii, Missouri and the excerpt *Crazy Eddy on the Judgment Day* is the story of "Eddy...a dwarf and the long deceased owner of the town café...forced up out of the local cemetery in his coffin by the flood waters and carried downstream to New Orleans." The first illustration is of Eddy, an El Día de los Muertos skeleton with a chapeau, rowing his coffin down the river. Eddy's

monologue tells of him and his friends, life in the underworld, stories of a father and son losing their belongings in the flood, etc. Eddy speaks with that exaggerated cliché-inflected speech of broken English that some writers like to use when they want a Southern Eccentric Character. Really there isn't anything here and taken out of the context of a narrative poem the monologue just falls flat.

The chapbook is well printed and the illustrations fine, but out of sync with the poem (and in one instance I don't know what the illustration is supposed to be). Ms. Russell-Steuart does have potential as the book design and look are enjoyable and the "centerfold" linocut illustration is executed with vigor and skill. I especially like the Thai mango endpapers - green-black and yellow with some leaves, like moss and bumble bees.



## Seen and Heard

One of the goals of *Bibliographica* is to let folks know what is going on in the fine press world. To that end, each issue includes brief notices of new or interesting titles as well as other tidbits of information. We also maintain Fine Press News, an online source for new and forthcoming publications available at <http://finepress.blogspot.com>. If you have news that you would like included in either forum, please contact the editor at [aeoluspress@yahoo.com](mailto:aeoluspress@yahoo.com).

Kira and I made it to Oak Knoll Fest this year, though could only attend one day of the book fair proper, much to my disappointment (speaking of disappointment: could somebody open up a vegetarian or vegetarian-friendly restaurant in New Castle? It's hard for non-meat eaters to find anything substantial to eat during Oak Knoll festivities). It was great to see everyone again and to meet printers whom I had previously only known via e-mail. On to the news. ✨ John Randle

indicated that Whittington's grand leaf book *Pages from Presses* has been delayed until next year. Whittington's most recent production, *A View of the Cotswolds*, was on display at Oak Knoll. It's a lovely book and well worth a look. ✨ Old School Press's *Harry Carter, Typographer* has been a big success for them, so much so that the three previously unpublished Carter essays that accompany the deluxe edition have been made available separately for purchase. ✨ Gaylord Schanilec's long-awaited book *Mayflies of the Driftless Region* came out last month. The deluxe edition includes a really cool slip case adorned with handmade flies. I'm sure for many a book about mayflies does not sound exciting, but Schanilec's wood engravings are wonderfully detailed and mesmerizing. ✨ Graham Moss is perhaps the most manic printer in the business. Since *Art for Life* was published, Incline Press has produced a catalog to an exhibit about Peggy Angus, a book about the history of Manchester Metropolitan University, and an edition of Dickens' *A Christmas Tale* with illustrations by Chris Burke. In the near future, expect at least *A Paper Snowstorm: Toni Savage's Leicester Broadsheets* and an announcement for three books next year (including an autobiography of a nineteenth-century bookseller). ✨ The Oxford Book Fair was held again in November. This year's Gregynog Letterpress prize went to Susan Allix for her book *Through Closed Doors*. The Judges' Choice Awards went to Barbarian Press for *Hoi Barbaroi*, Incline Press for *Art for Life*, Kickshaws Press for *Many Thanks*, Midnight Paper Sales for *Mayflies of the Driftless Region*, and Old School Press for *The Bricks of Venice*. ✨ Congratulations are due to Julie Russell-Steuart, who has a new addition to her family: Cassandra Christine Steuart, born August 25, 2005. ✨ 2006 is the 300th anniversary of the birth of both Benjamin Franklin and John Baskerville. I've heard a lot of noise made about Franklin, but is anyone planning to honor Baskerville in print this coming year?

