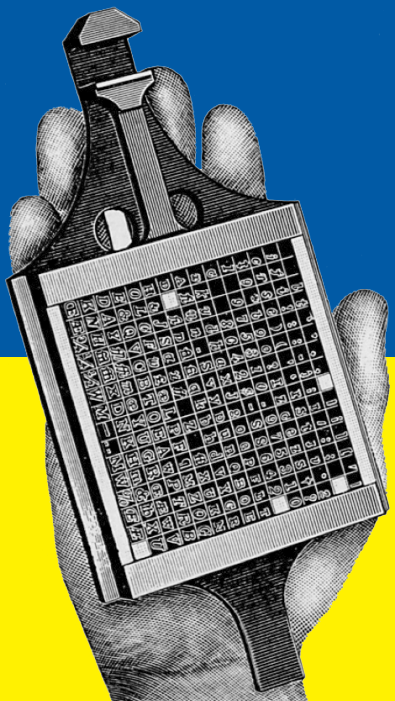
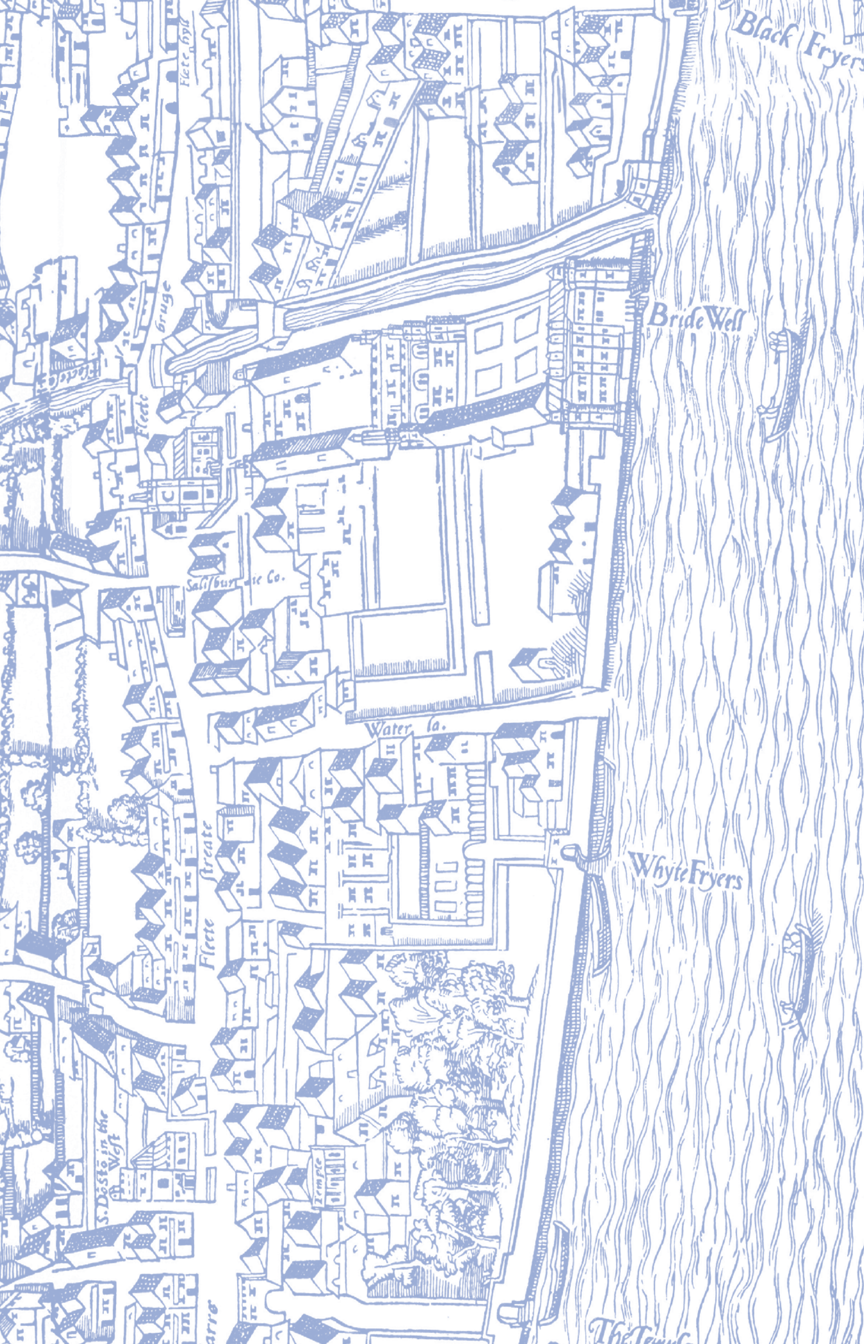
GLENN FLEISHMAN

LONDON KERNING

Typographic Perambulations around a City That Remembers





Black Fryers
Bride Well
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Whyte Fryers
Fleete streate
Temple

LONDON KERNING

TYPOGRAPHIC PERAMBULATIONS AROUND A CITY THAT REMEMBERS

GLENN FLEISHMAN

APERIODICAL LLC
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Dedicated to the memory of Berthold Wolpe,
an inspiration to me for three decades

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Get the latest version of this ebook at https://glog.glennf.com/lk-updates using the password **albertus**.

Cover image from Monotype Operator *(1912). Inside front cover a detail from the "Agas Map" (1633), depicting London in the 1560s via British History Online. Inside back cover map from Ordnance Survey 1:1056 (1893–1896). Back cover image of Anchor brewery building sign in Southwark, London, by the author (2017).*

CONTENTS

Signage near the west end of Fleet Street, left over from the heyday of newspapers

THE HEART OF ENGLISH PRINTING

FOREWORD

This book arose from a unique opportunity: a potentially once-in-a-lifetime exhibition of the work of type designer Berthold Wolpe at The Type Archive in London. Pondering the logistics of making the trip led to the idea of planning chatty meetings with type designers and letterpress printers while I was there. And that, in turn, sparked a thought: shouldn't I document what I learn, given the precariousness of these people and places remaining in London?

A few weeks before my trip, I floated the notion of supporting this project as a crowdfunding campaign, and people quickly helped me double my goal. Thank you, both to all who supported it in its early phase, and to those who purchased it at a later point, as it coalesced into a real thing. The campaign enabled me to travel to London, talk to many amazing people while I was there, and then research and produce this book. Since my return, I had email exchanges and conversations with a few people I couldn't squeeze into the trip.

While in London, many fortuitous bits of luck let me meet more people and see more archives by far than I'd hoped. While the trip wasn't predestined, my arbitrary timing revealed much more than expected.

This is an idiosyncratic book, akin to the kind of titles published when travelers returned from distant lands in the 17th century, bearing tales of bony-plated rhinoceroses and oddly shaped birds called dodos that were easy to catch but tasted a little funny. It's not an exhaustive account of everything to do with type and printing in London, but a path I carved out that provides a personal picture of the whole.

—Glenn Fleishman, 2018

My goof on the City of London's signage

INTRODUCTION

London was already around 1,500 years old when Englishman William Caxton returned from Bruges, the Netherlands, with the craft of printing. He set up shop in 1476 in Westminster, a city that is part of what is now Greater London. But a printer he brought with him, Wynkyn de Worde, receives due credit for later establishing the heart of the city's printing industry and much more:

> *The City's modern role, at the forefront of a global financial network, derives above all from the traditions of printing, typefounding and publishing which stem back to before 1500, when Wynkyn de Worde, who was buried in St Bride's Church, brought the printing press to Fleet Street.*
>
> — Founder's London A–Z *(1998), Justin Howes & Nigel Roche*

In late November 2017, I found myself passing where the Strand turns into the west end of the short length of Fleet Street, a place whose symbolic value has outlasted its concrete meaning. Newspapers and magazines once flourished on Fleet Street, but none remain. Ghosts still linger, like brickwork that promotes the *Dundee Evening Telegraph* and related publications on the side of a building, plaques in the sidewalk, and an iron hand letterpress in the front window of DC Thomson—obscured by window decals from the animated Dennis the Menace reboot. DC Thomson is a media company that cherishes its letterpress past, a friend who works there informs me, and has printing archives at its Dundee, Scotland, offices.

Heading east towards St Paul's Cathedral, turn right down Bride

Navigation from Fleet Street

Lane, a narrow alley that passes St Bride's Church. Where it takes a curve to the left, you see a stately tall brick building. It's the home of the St Bride Foundation, which contains the extraordinary historical printing-related book collection and other archives of St Bride Library, including work by aforementioned Caxton. There I saw remarkable pieces of typographic history in a library that has nearly closed on multiple occasions, and the future of which remains shaky.

Its precarious state isn't unique. In pre-travel emails, a week of visits with printers, type designers, and historians in London, and email and video calls afterwards, I find that five and a half centuries of printing in London appear balanced on the edge of a precipice.

The work cited above, *Founder's London A–Z*, documented what in 1998 was already a distant memory in the city of its printing history, and that was when aspects still flourished in modern forms throughout Greater London. As once-London-now-Cambridge type designer Jeremy Tankard said in a talk in 2012, "Never mind 'standing on the shoulders of giants'; in London, we can walk in their footsteps, and perhaps even shiver a little."

While there remain letterpress printers in the metropolitan area, and St Bride lies smack dab in the middle of the City of London, nearly everyone I spoke to who didn't have the luck or timing to purchase a house or building some years ago is concerned about how long they can keep their shop, studio, or rented flat or house.

One printer, Phil Abel, has moved his Hand & Eye Press twice in the last seven years. Another told me the rent of his former studio went up twentyfold over 20 years, leading him to give it up. The folks who

run Counter Press in the East End have a lovely bijou space, but have seen construction and change start to sweep through what was once a distant neighborhood from the center. Yet another owns their building, home to many artists, but the noise of construction is nearly deafening at times during the day, making work difficult.

My trip to London was to capture what I fervently hope isn't the dying breath of the last vestiges of printing history and letterpress shops. Some parts will surely survive in place, or be put in storage and reclaimed in the future, as has happened multiple times in the last several decades. In academic institutions, at St Bride, at The Type Archive, and elsewhere, letterpress shops have been set up anew or refreshed, used for pedagogical purposes. And some printers have decamped with equipment to elsewhere in England, where they keep hot-metal composition and presses active.

St Bride Institute, almost exactly as it was in 1894; buildings around it have changed

Paired with my visit to the St Bride library was one to The Type Archive, founded over 20 years ago through the sheer force of will of Susan (Sue) Shaw, a long-time book editor and letterpress printer. She had and has the assistance of many others, but it's her iron spine that has kept the place intact.

The archive has critical portions of equipment from the English Monotype Corporation's hot-metal composition manufacturing plant. Through a division called Monotype Hot-Metal Ltd, it continues to fill orders for fresh molds and other material through the assistance of a dogged septuagenarian and a few octogenarians.

Through this book, I hope to bring more attention to what can be preserved and advanced. London's printing history must abide.

The dedication stone of the St Bride Foundation Institute: left, an engraving from The British Printer *in 1893; right, as it stands in the building in 2017*

Opposite page: Brass patterns of Albertus for making Monotype matrices

I KNOW THAT FACE: MEETING AND RE-MEETING BERTHOLD WOLPE

Nearly 30 years ago, I met Berthold Wolpe through his typeface Albertus. Born in 1905, he had died in 1989, the year in which I began to learn about him. He had lived a long and reportedly happy life, full of family, friends, and well-regarded professional work with accolades from colleagues and his adopted country, England. Two of my mentors at Yale University knew Albertus well. (I received a degree in graphic design in the late 1980s and worked for two years at the college's well-regarded in-house design service and letterpress, digital, and offset printing plant.)

Greer Allen, the just-former and fourth University Printer at Yale, and Roland Hoover, the then-current and fifth, admired Wolpe and that typeface in particular. Greer had even known Wolpe for decades, and Berthold's son, Toby Wolpe, told me that he remembers that Greer and his wife, Sue Allen, visited at least once. Roland, a lifelong letterpress printer in the 1980s, had fonts of Albertus, and admired and used it regularly. (Greer passed away in 2005. Roland was still printing in his late 90s at last contact a few years ago.)

I took up as my senior project making a digital rendition of Albertus at Greer and Roland's request: a font that could be used on what was then the still relatively new Macintosh computer. Using the Arts of the Book Collection at the library and items from Roland's own resources, I found type specimen sheets and other early records, and proceeded to draw the typeface. I called my version Furioso, a joke about a 16th Century Italian epic poem a classmate was studying called *Orlando Furioso*, which translates as *Roland the Berserker*. Roland took the font's name in stride.

Albertus had also been the typeface used in the 1960s television series *The Prisoner*, which I'd watched with my father on PBS in the early 80s and fallen in love with. The type permeated the show: it was used in the credits and in nearly all the signage in the show's environment. The designers of that show had created a

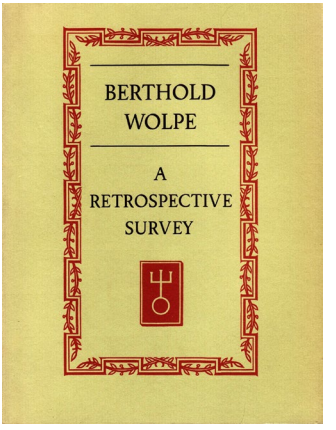
Furioso "Prisoner" e (left), Albertus Nova revival e (right)

dotless lowercase i and an oddball lowercase e, which aped a type style called *uncial*, and resembles the much-later euro symbol. I added them to my version, which became modestly popular among *Prisoner* fans.

The Prisoner remains an influential usage of Albertus.

At the time, I did some research about Wolpe, which was harder when all the world's information was seemingly (but not actually) at our fingertips. Greer mentioned offhandedly that the French teaching phrase, "Ou est la plume de ma tante?" ("Where is my aunt's pen?") should have been coined for Wolpe, who inveterately collected pens—and a bit of everything.

It wasn't until years later that I came across the 1980 catalog for a retrospective of his work at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and realized Greer was paraphrasing from an essay in its introduction. The essay, by A.S. Osley, quoted the orator's speech when Wolpe was awarded an honorary doctorate, who also noted, "Mr Wolpe is one of the greatest magpie-historians of our age."



It was from this catalog that I came to understand the breadth and depth of his work in type, ornament, and book cover design. From time to time over decades, I'd find a short mention of him, see more of his work in print, or encounter someone who knew of him and who, almost as oral myth, passed on more details.

In 2017, I received an email from a press relations person for Monotype, the firm for which Wolpe had created faces in the 1930s. While

Monotype's presentation of its five Wolpe revivals

Monotype as a business had transformed through bankruptcy, merger, and other transactions, its current incarnation still owned the rights to a wide array of typefaces. The PR person told me that a reissue—a revival, really—of five Wolpe faces was imminent. Was I interested?

Was I! I might have been the single most-interested person in the world outside Monotype and his family.

In conjunction with the revivals, Monotype sponsored an exhibition of Wolpe's work at The Type Archive, the organization's first-ever public exhibition since its founding over 20 years before. As I read about the archive, the exhibition, and revived my research into Wolpe's work and life, I thought about the lark of flying from Seattle to London to see it, but the timing was off: the exhibition was only for October.

I spoke by phone to Toshi Omagari, a young designer who created the revised and expanded versions of the faces, and discovered Wolpe had four children I was unaware of, and all were still with us and thriving, most around London. I struck up a correspondence with the youngest, Toby Wolpe, who is an editor at a major online tech news organization.

Then I discovered that the exhibition was extended through December. My fate was sealed and off I went.

WOLPE'S LIFE AND WORK

Born in Offenbach am Main, Germany, on October 29, 1905, Wolpe entered the Offenbach Kunstgewerbschule (School of Art) in 1924, and became a favored student of already legendary type designer and calligrapher Rudolf Koch. (Koch's best known faces today are Kabel and Neuland.) After completing his time at Offenbach in 1927, he apprenticed at Pforzheim Art School in 1928 to learn to work gold, silver, and copper.

Wolpe joined Koch as an assistant from 1929 to 1934 at his small studio, the Offenbacher Werkstatt, which often included Koch's current and former students. Wolpe taught at the Frankfurt School of Art from 1930 to 1933, when he was removed from his post by the National Socialist (Nazi) Party, which had just come to power, as Wolpe was Jewish.

Koch tried to intervene on his behalf, but died of natural causes in 1934, and Wolpe was forbidden in 1935 by the government to work as a designer. He received a letter that February, which read in part, "…as you are non-Aryan, as such do not possess the reliability and suitability to create and spread German cultural values. I forbid you from further practicing your profession as a commercial artist."

In 1932, he had visited England and met with Stanley Morison, who worked at Monotype guiding its type commissions under the modest title of "typography consultant," a position he held from 1923 until his death in 1967. Morison was taken by capital letters that Wolpe had inscribed in bronze, and commissioned a typeface, which would become Albertus Titling.

With work in Germany untenable and conditions getting worse, Wolpe left Germany for England in 1935. In 1939, he returned to Germany to bring his remaining immediate family, his mother and sister, to England—almost certainly saving their lives. From 1935 to 1940, Wolpe worked for Fanfare Press and other publishers, where he designed covers, including creating typefaces and custom lettering.

In 1940, however, England transported Wolpe and a number of other German nationals in the country to Australia through waters infested with German submarines that regularly sunk both passenger and military ships. Through efforts by Morison and others, Wolpe was allowed

to return in 1941. He went to work for the publishers Faber & Faber, and stayed there until retirement in 1975, designing over 1,500 book covers.

Wolpe married Margaret Smith in November 1941, following his return from Australia, and became a naturalized citizen in England in 1947. They had four children: from oldest to youngest, Sarah, Deborah, Paul, and Toby. Margaret was 14 years his junior.

While his most fecund period in designing type was in the 1930s and early 1940s, Wolpe continued to create new lettering styles; research, write, and teach about calligraphy and lettering, historical and modern; and create a few new faces as well as new weights and versions of his existing type. He also taught at several schools: the Camberwell School of Art from 1949 to 1953; the School of Graphic Design at the Royal College of Art from 1956 to 1975 (which awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1968); and from 1975 until his passing at the City and Guilds of London School of Art. (He and Margaret lived adjacent to the school for a time.)

He was awarded the title Royal Designer of Industry (RDI) in 1959 by the Royal Society of Arts, and named an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1983.

In 1980, the Victoria and Albert Museum mounted the retrospective of his work I mentioned above. The retrospective's catalog is invaluable to understanding his work, and remains the only authoritative accounting of his work and career. While the 1980 edition remains available from used booksellers, you can find a Faber & Faber reprint from 2005 more readily and affordably.

Wolpe died on July 5, 1989; Margaret passed away on July 16, 2006.

TYPEFACES WITH LASTING IMPACT

Wolpe's fame comes most broadly and prominently from his typefaces, but the majority were designed and executed in metal during the 1930s. After that, he worked relatively little on type meant to be set and printed, and focused almost entirely on lettering and calligraphy, and teaching, studies, and writing related to it.

Albertus came first, originally issued in 1935 as Albertus Titling with

a limited character set. As a titling font, it contained no descenders. It also had an antique-style numeral 2, delightful and a hallmark, but later replaced with a more typical 2. Derived from brass engravings carved with a chisel, Albertus doesn't quite conform to a serif or sans serif face, but flares at its terminals in a way that preserves a sense of its origins without appearing fussy.

Wolpe later expanded Albertus to a full upper and lowercase with quirky elements that make it readily identifiable. The square counterform inside the lowercase "a" is unusual, for one. And while the letters work together harmoniously, they have a remarkable amount of individuality.

Two unique characters

Wolpe later created light, bold, and black versions of the face, with the bold and black phototype versions coming when he was elderly. Monotype designer Toshi noted, "We have his original drawings of his bold and black trials in lowercase, but there was so much work that had to be done manually for an 80-year-old man. It was a really tough job, and he couldn't do it."

The bold feels more successful than the light, which seems too skinny and not quite in the same family. The italic is particularly weak, and it's unclear how much of a hand Wolpe had in it, as Toshi can't find any drawings related to it. It's compressed and mostly obliqued instead of redrawn as an italic, and lacks the same hand and intent behind it. Other designers and production people created further adaptations of

Albertus in various weights through metal, phototype, and digital ages, causing the face to wander far from its origins.

While Albertus's characteristics are no longer unique, it remains set off from other faces. The fact that it works well at large sizes and in metal plaques and flat signage has given it a lot of life. It's used for book covers, city directions, and titling on Web sites and elsewhere, because of its sense of distinctiveness and monumentality.

Albertus is the typeface of the City of London's signage, as well as the Borough of Lambeth, the location of The Type Archive and where Berthold and Margaret lived for many years. In addition to appearing in the 1960s *The Prisoner* TV series, Albertus is used for some titling in and marketing of *The Lord of the Rings* movies, making it vaguely familiar to a new generation. (Most of the type used for the main titling was created by hand.)

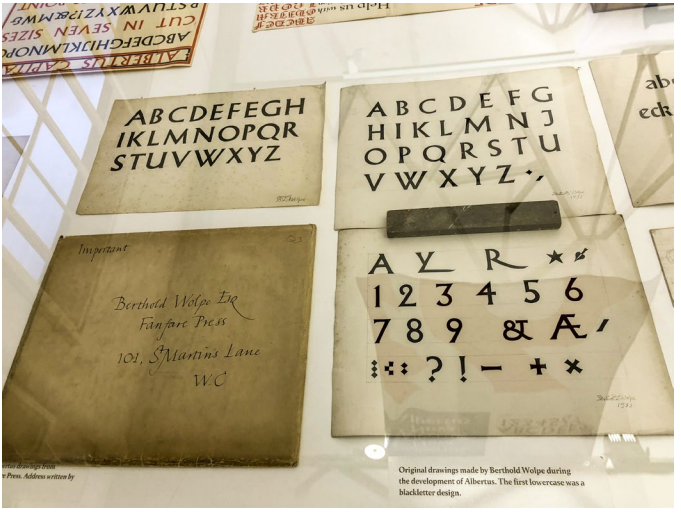
It also found itself used on possibly one of the most boring commemorative signs ever designed to endure the ages. It's the face used for new signs in the U.S. Capitol Subway System. Trader Joe's relies on it for its line of Asian foods. Watching the movie *Hairspray*, Pia Zadora holds up a copy of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*, a title set large in Albertus. I can't stop seeing it: even the sample book I received from the company I contracted for the print version of this work happened to use Albertus. I did try an experiment: I went to an Amazon retail book store a few months ago and looked at hundreds of book covers. It may have gone out of style for books, as I only spotted a single cover with Albertus, and that unfortunately relied on the italic.

From a tweet by Alistair Coleman

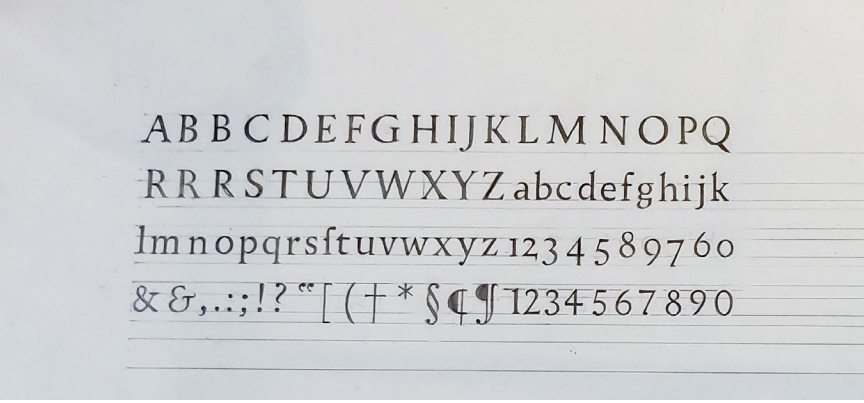
Wolpe's other faces are less familiar to designers and readers, because they've been somewhat or largely unavailable since he created them. These are Hyperion (first cut in 1932 in Koch's workshop, but released decades later), Tempest (1935), Pegasus (1937), Sachsenwald (1938), Fanfare (late 1930s), Decorata (1955), and LPTB Italic (1973).

Fanfare and Tempest, both titling faces, were designed for book covers, though oddly Tempest was created for Fanfare Press, while Fanfare found its way onto Faber & Faber covers. Both feel exceedingly modern, despite their age.

Hyperion and Pegasus are his two typefaces intended for text sizes in books, but neither found their way to popularity after the metal era. Hyperion is an italic that's quite lovely for poetry and short passages. Pegasus lacks the regularity of many text faces, but remains highly legible, and was meant in part to complement Albertus headlines. A version in phototype was created of Pegasus in 1980 with Matthew Carter (and Shelley Winter for the bold) for the Victoria and Albert museum catalog, but it remained largely unavailable.



Original drawings for Albertus shown in The Type Archive's exhibition



Pegasus drawn in pencil at 14 point

Toshi says that Wolpe insisted type designers needed to draw letters at close to their actual size before making the large drawings used for reduction for matrix cutting, and he found Wolpe's Pegasus pencil work at 14 points. (This drawing above appeared in the exhibition.) He notes that Pegasus suffered from being cut much thinner than its appearance in print for ink spread.

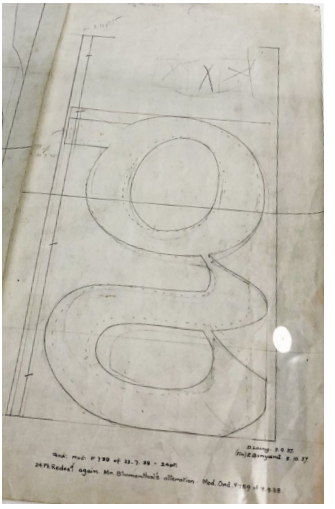
Toshi also discovered that many of Wolpe's designs thrive on differences. For instance, he says he was unable to copy and paste any details in Pegasus in the font-design software he relies on. "All the different shapes of 'h' compared to other letters—nothing matches." He finds this an antidote to modern design tendencies. "This reminds me how unnecessarily precise and consistent we have become," he says. "History has taught us really good lessons—like consistency is overrated."

The typefaces as executed by Monotype for metal were sometimes interpreted less than perfectly after they left Wolpe's pen, often to accommodate typecasting machines, which had various limits on widths, kerns (parts that hang over), descenders, and dimensions. In other cases, Wolpe tried varying approaches for a letter and settled on one, but left traces of others.

Toshi found, for instance, that Wolpe drew and erased several notions for the distinctive lower case "g" in Albertus; that "g" wound up appearing in different forms as well, depending on the hot-metal casting equipment it was interpreted for. Some of those original

drawings with erasures, brass templates used for cutting molds, and type proofs from the factor appeared in the exhibition.

Sachsenwald is an odd duck among these faces. It's a blackletter face, usually referred to as Gothic in English, with aspects of a style called Fraktur. Fraktur remained in use in Germany until well into the Nazi era, when fascists first said it was utterly German and then changed their mind.

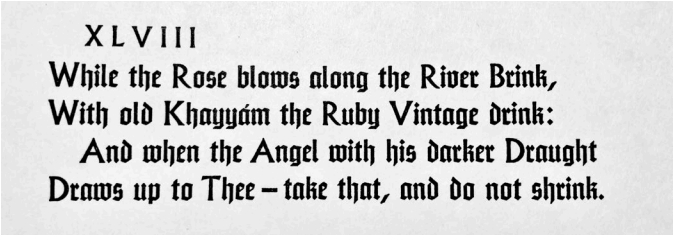


The Albertus "g" adaptations

Wolpe started work on the typeface for a German publisher, with it then named Bismarck Schrift. This may have referred to a comment by Otto von Bismarck, a towering figure in German history, who returned German-language books given to him that weren't set in Fraktur with the message, "I don't read German books in Latin letters!"

Drawings of Sachsenwald

Wolpe brought the design with him to England and Monotype, but there was some difficulty in creating a Fraktur face. "A German publisher commissioning a British company to make a blackletter typeface" was problematic, Toshi says. Monotype cut it and released it, but only two sets of the matrices, or moulds, used on Monotype's hot-metal casting systems were even made. One resides at the Bixler Press and Letterfoundry in New York, who actively and commercially cast Monotype.



The Fanfare Rubaiyat *of 1940*

Tom Rickner, director of Monotype Studio, pointed me during a phone interview to an edition of *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. It was illustrated by Arthur Szyk and published in 1940 with tipped-in color plates by Fanfare Press. I purchased an affordable clean copy. This title uses Albertus for capital letters and Sachsenwald for lowercase. It's beautiful and a little strange, and one of the few historic uses. Rickner noted that Wolpe considered Sachsenwald originally as the lowercase for Albertus, and some drawings showing that appeared in the exhibition.

Toshi designed five revivals in total: Albertus Nova, his reworking from original sources and expansion of Albertus; Wolpe Fanfare; Wolpe Pegasus; Sachsenwald; and Wolpe Tempest. (The slightly different names for four of the five fonts are meant to set them off more clearly.)

Decorata was cut for a publisher and was never made available. What is now Transport for London (TfL) commissioned an italic version of its Johnston typeface (discussed later), which doesn't seem to have been used or made broadly available. (I found no mention or example of it in a room devoted to type and design at the London Transport Museum.) The lovely Hyperion's rights are owned by the descendant firm of the Bauer Type Foundry, Fundición Tipográfica Neufville, and hasn't been re-released digitally. At least not yet.

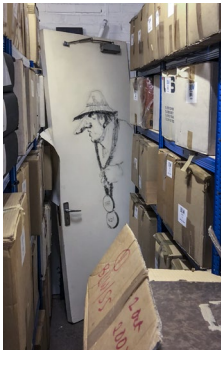
KEEPING WOLPE'S MEMORIES ALIVE

While Monotype had many legendary type designers across decades, Wolpe stands out because of the extent to which Albertus permeated cultural memory in London and made and makes an impact elsewhere.

The Type Archive's Wolpe exhibition; Sue Shaw in purple (photo by Alistair Hall)

The Type Archive acquired Wolpe's archives from the family, and Paul, a retired doctor, and the second youngest, makes regular visits to sort and index the papers. Berthold was a collector who worked in clutter, but he seemed to always have a specific reason for his acquisitions.

Sue Shaw showed me the Wolpe archives, neatly packed and numbered boxes occupying a number of shelves in a vault in the building. The archives also include such interesting items as a full-sized interior door of a house with a drawing of Wolpe on it.



The exhibition was a way to let the public see a tiny portion of what The Type Archive has on hand. (I discuss its holdings in a later chapter.) In a white upstairs room in what the organization calls its Alphabet House, cupboards were covered by floor-to-ceiling

panels, and banners hung from the ceiling. The archive had installed custom display cases, and city signage and other decoration filled out the space. I visited on one of the last days it was open, a bitter cold Friday, and a number of people passed through, asking questions with great interest.

Toshi was often on hand during open hours across the exhibition's run to talk to visitors, offering remarkable insight from his research and work. To investigate the original intent of Wolpe's designs, he went through Wolpe's papers as well as Monotype's archives, parts of which remain in Salfords, south of London, where the company once had thousands of employees.

The exhibition also included dozens of examples of his book covers, designed across 40 years, including the original inked and corrected hand lettering, so you could see him "at work."

My observation from seeing the span of his life's work at one go is that he seemed to have few regrets: he created type, lettering, and other designs; worked on revisions; and moved along. Some artists, whether

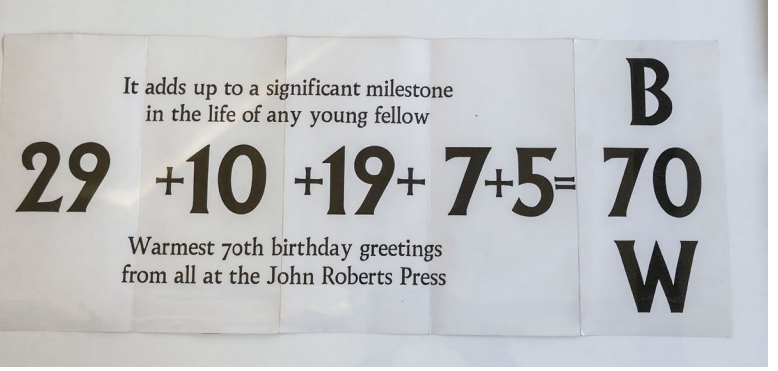
Drawings and paste-up by Wolpe for Faber & Faber book covers (photo by Alistair Hall)

they're working in a commercial or purely aesthetic realm, can be stymied by the constraints put on them or ones they put upon themselves. Berthold's sheer productivity, variety of style, and inventiveness makes it clear he wasn't one of them.

A beautiful video shot by Monotype to introduce the revivals includes great footage from the archive's vaults, of original material, and of the exhibition, as well as interviews with Toshi, Paul Wolpe, Sue, and Matthew Carter.

Toshi Omagari & Toby Wolpe at the exhibition

Printed samples of Albertus from Monotype (Hall). Overleaf, from top: Birthday greetings, Berthold obituary, Tempest Titling (Hall), Toshi explaining exhibition



There is an exuberance about all the different work he did for Rudolf Koch between 1927 and 1932 which overflows from all the different media, tapestry, metal-work, jewellery, enamel, in which he worked. All bear the mark of his fertile and distinctive talent, most of all those that are lettered.

For lettering, seen as a pattern that bears a message, Wolpe had a unique talent. When he came to England, he was conscripted by Stanley Morison to design types for the Monotype Corporation. If Albertus was the first and most famous, there were others, the most beautiful smile in London. When he spoke (and he was a loyal attender at the Double Crown Club and the Printing Historical Society), it was always with some wholly original observation. If Albertus never made his fortune, it pleased his sense of irony to find it all over the world, gigantic on Centre Point, minute on Spanish coins.

Berthold Ludwig Wolpe, graphic designer and teacher, born 29 October 1905, married 1941 Margaret Smith (two sons, two daughters), died 5 July 1989.

quently about their problems, and often advocated their views.

and father of Adrian and Ma
cremation was private. No
please, but donations may b
The Royal Berkshire Hospi
Anniversary Appeal, Readin
Thames Valley Hospice,
Service of Thanksgiving to b
St George's Chapel, Windso
on Monday 9 October, at
Applications for tickets
Chapter Clerk, St George'
Windsor Castle.

WALKER: On 28 June 198
tragic accident in Cornwa
Ann, beloved and only da
David and Hazel. Funeral
Penmount Crematorium,
Tuesday 11 July, at 11.20am
and floral tributes to Wak
Services, 33 Bread Street
telephone: 62423 or 65316

Brocklehurst: Cyril Robert,
June.

JOHNSTON AND ALBERTUS: THE FACES OF LONDON

London feels like a city of type. This is in part because of the remarkable prescient exercise in branding that the Underground and London-area buses engaged in starting in 1916 with bold, clean symbols and their own typeface, Johnston. Created by Edward Johnston under the direction of transit visionary Frank Pick, the type was intended to be crisp, legible, and unpretentious, and work in a large variety of circumstances.

Johnston unifies the city, because it's omnipresent and consistent without being oppressive. It's the typographic lifeblood of the streets and stations. It works hand-in-hand with the roundel (or "bullseye") symbol developed for the Underground in the early 1900s, and later expanded to all transit. (You can find the roundel *everywhere*. I looked down at one of the many treads in the Mornington Crescent Tube stop, a stop made famous via a BBC comedy program, and spotted the roundel—with non-Johnston type—on every single metal reinforcement.)

Because London has been a city for about two millennia, and despite fire and the Blitz and urban renewal and the current feverish pace of

Overleaf: Johnston Sans locked in metal at London Transport Museum (LTM) Depot, Acton (photo by Alexander Baxevenis). Above: Roundel from LTM.

A Tube stair's tread

redevelopment, it has accreted buildings and signage. Often, a sign or plaque or piece of stone is all that's left of a building. This memory adds to the layers of type.

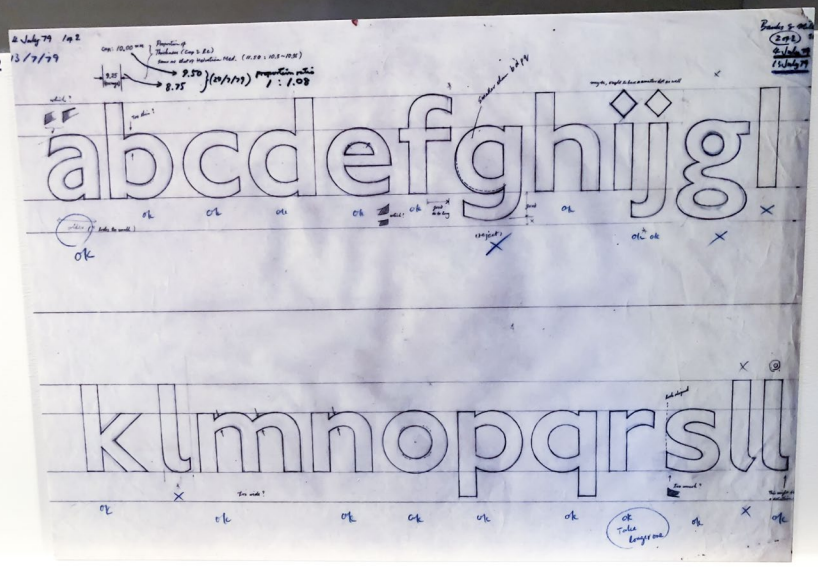
Albertus isn't as ubiquitous as Johnston, but it's decidedly the city's second face. This is quite apparent in the City of London, also known as the Square Mile for its dimensions, about 1.12 square miles, where Albertus is the "house" typeface for signage.

The City is the financial center of the metropolis, and also where the courts fall in or near. As I noted in the introduction, there's an argument that Wynkyn de Worde establishing a press in Fleet Street also led to the coalescing of these functions in that tiny area: all of them had heavy need of printing, often with fast turnarounds.

You can find Albertus used casually elsewhere, too, as you can see in pictures on the next page. I spotted it on a restaurant sign while on a bus to the postal museum, at which I found a bronze letters flap in an exhibit set neatly in Albertus.

In Fleet Street, I poked into one side alley, which alerted me to the path to Dr Johnson's house and a variety of other establishments, as well as featuring the City of London borough sign in Albertus, and a bronze plaque in the ground with the front page of a newspaper. Nearly all the news organizations that made their homes on Fleet Street went under or decamped to

An alleyway in Fleet Street, full of layers



Canary Wharf or other now high-end and tony district years before. All that's left are the plaques, some building signage, and the St Bride Foundation and its printing library.

N.B.: Johnston Sans is *not* Gill Sans, though Eric Gill did assist on Johnston. But the Stephenson Blake typefounders who made Johnston for transport use also designed a quite similar face called Granby, which routinely stood in—Johnston wasn't cut in sizes below 48 points.

Clockwise from top left: Early drawings of Johnston (LTM); later drawings, specimens, and letterpress lockup (LTM); the Mornington Crescent station; a newspaper plaque on Fleet Street; a WWII notice that only ticket holders can access a particular bomb shelter (LTM); City of London and Borough of Lambeth signage (The Type Archive); letters flap in exhibit (Postal Museum); Albertus on a restaurant sign captured from a bus en route to the Postal Museum.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QU WA &YXZJ
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RVP
MORNINGTON CRESCENT STATION


SHELTER
FULL
except to reserved
ticket holders
NEAREST PUBLIC SHELTER


LEADENHALL STREET
EC3
CITY OF LONDON
DURAND
GARDENS
SW9


THE TYPE ARCHIVE

THE TYPE ARCHIVE AND ST BRIDE: ENGLAND'S PRINTING HISTORY

Bob Richardson and Sue Shaw are unlikely Willy Wonkas, but their respective doors are candy factories of wonder for anyone with a historical interest in type or printing. It's really impossible for me still to express how overwhelming it was to view the collections and machinery at the St Bride Library, at which Bob acts as library manager, and The Type Archive, founded by Sue, where she is a constant presence.

The two institutions possess a remarkable percentage of the history of printing and type in England, plus a little bit from elsewhere. The St Bride Library and The Type Archive together have most of Monotype's paper and industrial past: St Bride has some of the historical documents that Monotype wasn't able to keep for itself, while The Type Archive has a vast array of machinery, some portion of which is still in good repair and regular use, alongside the corporate and manufacturing records of Monotype.

The two institutions are separately organized and operated, but there is plenty of cross pollination between the two. Bob, a letterpress printer for five decades and retired BBC graphic designer, acts as the institutional memory of St Bride, and volunteers two days a week at each. Many people have volunteered or worked at one or the other at times. Everyone I spoke with connected with type and printing had a fervent interest in expanding access to both collections while keeping them in their current settings.

However, there's been a long-running concern about both institutions remaining intact and in place, because of a lack of any consistent funding source for their missions. It's not that no one cares: everyone who knows what they are cares. It is that there is no consistent advocate for either group, someone with the personal funds or the organizational or political power to provide a permanent, steady foundation for their future. No one is at fault for not stepping up, and yet the two precious sets of holdings are always in a state of worry.

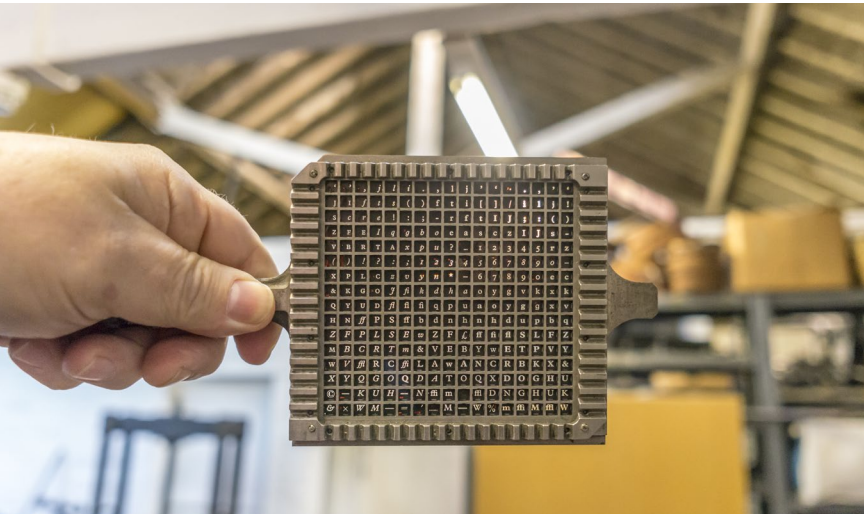
In a 2005 obituary of the remarkable Justin Howes in the *Guardian*, his commitment to both The Type Archive and the St Bride Library is noted, concluding with an ominous statement:

More recently, Howes switched his energies from the St Bride Library to the fledgling Type Museum [now Type Archive] in Stockwell, south London. Here he worked three days a week as curator, with a grant from the Pilgrim Trust, sorting a large collection of typographic materials, much of it still unpacked: a hoard of heavy industrial relics, which, like the St Bride Library, faces a perilous future, kept afloat for the moment by hopes of raising huge sums of money.

Multiple crises have since occurred in both places. In the midst of accelerated development throughout London, finding the right patrons and underwriters seems surprisingly difficult. Both institutions require more staff just to keep in place, and both would benefit from money that would allow archiving, conservation, and even cleaning of old gear, as well as providing open hours for the public and researchers.

At some point, many people I communicated with in London worried to me, St Bride Library and The Type Archive might find themselves with no recourse but to have their resources packed up and put into archival warehouses, located far from the city, and potentially made permanently safe—and almost completely unavailable.

A Monotype matrix case contains phototype—Monophoto! — at The Type Archive.

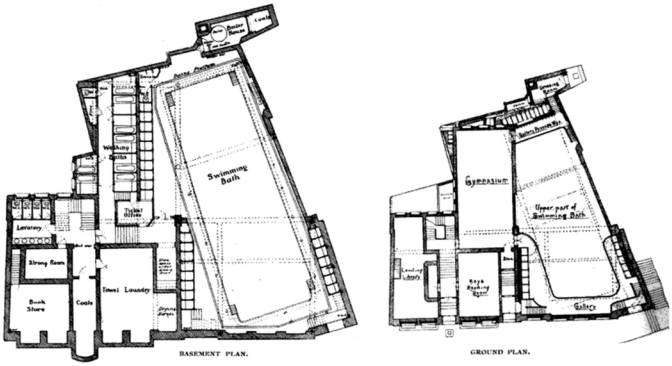


ST BRIDE PRINTING LIBRARY

In 1891, work began on the St Bride Foundation Institute building in the shadow of the St Bride Church, with a plan to offer training to apprentices in printing and related trades practiced on the adjacent Fleet Street. It was located on the edge of what was once Henry VIII's Bridewell Palace—and later a poorhouse and prison.

It would become a gathering place for lectures, printing, reading, and bathing. Yes, bathing. The institute was built with a 75-by-27–foot swimming pool and washing baths, gymnasium, and accompanying facilities. It was believed at the time to be the only public pool in London, and was open to working men and women. At the school's dedication in 1893, the Prince of Wales laid the foundation stone—by tapping it thrice with a specially commissioned trowel—and commented how nice it would be for those attending classes to take a swim after spending time setting type. (The pool remains, and the Bridewell Theatre occupies the space, its seats on a hidden wooden framework.)

Also in 1891, the foundation acquired intact the library of the recently deceased William Blades, a successful printer in the city, who had made exhaustive—and I mean *exhaustive*—studies into the work of Caxton. His meticulous notes remain in his library. His collection was considered extraordinary at the time, and remains so in 2017.



Plans for the St Bride Foundation in the British Printer *(1893)*

The Prince of Wales laid the corner stone and then gave some excellent advice. At the close he said, "I may, perhaps, be allowed before concluding to utter a word of caution. I would venture to suggest that this institute should chiefly rely for success on "thoroughness." Do not start new departments until you are sure that the elementary part of your work cannot be more satisfactorily or more efficiently carried on than it is: and I would remind you likewise of a fact which is, I think, too often lost sight of in institutionsof this description—namely, that practical work taught by practical workmen is of far greater value —certainly to beginners— than the theoretical lectures of professors, who, however useful their teachings may be, have necessarily never had the occasion in actual practice to deal with or overcome the difficulties which workmen have to encounter when engaged in their trade.

One has to concur that this is excellent advice (from the dedication in 1893).

An additional library of technical materials was purchased using funds from a substantial donation by J. Passmore Edwards, a gentleman who Bob Richardson informs me made a number of donations to fund libraries and public buildings—over 70!—with the proviso that he be remembered eternally by having his name upon them, similar to Andrew Carnegie in the U.S. Bas relief profiles in plaster of Edwards and Blades appear within the Passmore Edwards library.

Some of Blades's extensive notes on Caxton in his library at St Bride

The school started classes in 1894, and the libraries opened in 1895. As for its quality, the *Inland Printer* in 1903 described St Bride as "undoubtedly the most furnished for purposes of practical instruction of any similar school in the United Kingdom, probably in the world."

The school succeeded well enough in its mission to need to expand, and while the library and other components remained off Fleet Street, the school went through two moves and mergers with other related institutions. It ultimately wound up at Elephant and Castle in 1949, where it assumed its current name, the London College of Communication, in 2004. It's part of the University of the Arts London. (While LCC no longer teaches how to print, there is a letterpress shop at another part of the university, Central Saint Martins.)

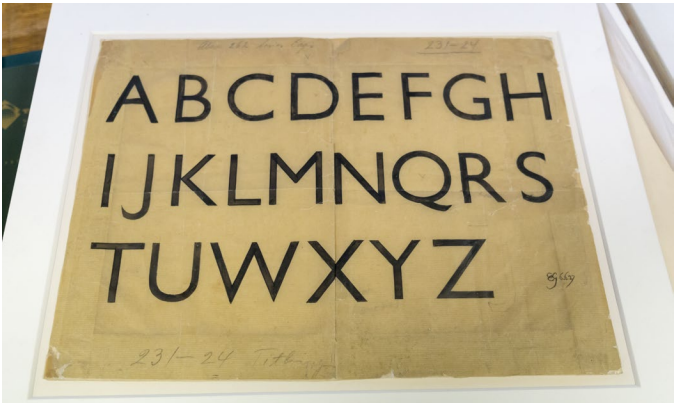
The library's ownership was shifted from the remaining St Bride Foundation to the City of London from 1966 to 2004. It was then returned to the foundation, which manages the historic building. While the City funded the library in what was by all reports a reasonably generous fashion, the foundation lacks the same deep pockets. The building is constantly rented for corporate functions, weddings, and other purposes as part of its necessary income, including the Passmore Edwards Library. (The library functions of the foundation operate as the St Bride Library.)

The varied parts of the library

The library is spread out around the building, partly for historical reasons, and partly because of relocations over time to free up space, which remains at a premium. It's inaccurate to describe it entirely as a library, too, despite the 100,000 volumes in its collection: it's really a set of multiple distinct parts under the same authority:

- The William Blades Library, an extraordinary and historical collection of about 2,000 volumes kept intact since his estate sold it to St Bride. The room it occupies was tailor made to replicate Blades' own study. It was refurbished a few years ago and looks magnificent.
- The Passmore Edwards Library, which contains valuable and historical volumes that are less precious, but highly useful as a snapshot and reference of the time.
- The Talbot Baines Reed collection, purchased by Passmore Edwards from Reed's estate, and donated to St Bride. Reed was a typefounder.
- Periodicals collected and retained over the library's life, including *The British Printer* and *Inland Printer/American Lithographer,* as well as the regular acquisition of books.

The Williams Blades Library



Gill's drawings of Gill Sans

- Papers and archives from various sources, including Eric Gill. Gill created wax rubbings of every bit of stonework and engraving that came from his studio, and those are at St Bride, as well as his original drawings of Gill Sans and other faces.
- Historical printing materials, such as punches that date to 18th Century printer William Caslon's workshop, including some believed to have been cut by him; stereotypes (a kind of mold-based duplicate) of remarkable decorative letters by 19th Century designer Louis John Pouchée; hand moulds for making type one piece at a time; matrices for casting type; and much more.

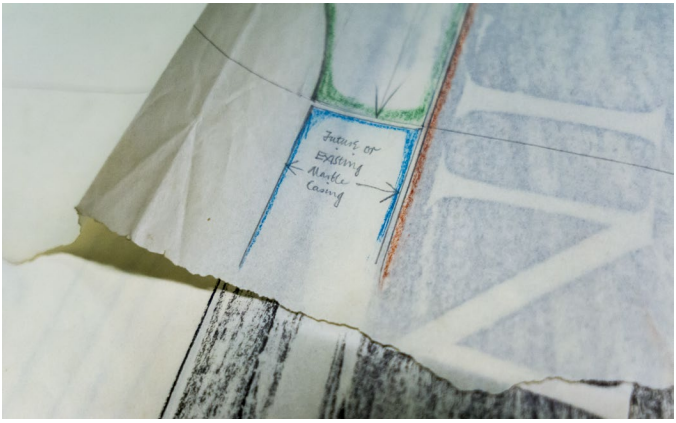
Pouchée stereotypes

- Materials used for teaching at St Bride in its much earlier days, including magic lantern slides.
- A collection of presses and type used for workshops and educational purposes, located in a lower room. The current Prince of Wales visited a few years ago and printed a sheet.
- A set of material assembled over decades from printing and graphics-arts trade shows and manufacturers, documenting the commercial and industrial side of the industry in the 1980s and 1990s.

Among other things, the library has teaching collections organized from its archives, so that it has a variety of interesting historical documents the staff can use to show a scope of the holdings in one place.

Looking into the innards

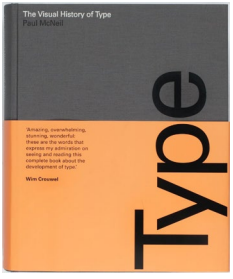
Access to the library's books and archives has been a concern for years. The library lost its paid staff and was effectively closed in 2015 for a time. More recently, it began offering limited hours two Wednesdays a month, though the schedule is reliant entirely on volunteers. Researchers, like yours truly, are welcomed when staff and time are available.



Gill's notes on Cunard, a never-released face

When I visited, St Bride was between chief librarians. Bob Richardson, a long-time volunteer, currently fills the role of library manager. He works alongside Mick Clayton in the letterpress studio and Heather Jardine, the resident librarian who handles access to the public portion of the library. James Mosley had served as chief librarian for four decades, retiring only a few years ago, and while I didn't meet him while there, he's a regular visitor, and continues to write authoritatively on type history on his blog.

The St Bride Library's open hours offer access to the public library on a second floor, which contains shelved volumes that can be consulted at will. Patrons can request volumes from the stacks for a small fee.



The 2017 magisterial book that traces printed type from its origins to the present, *The Visual History of Type*—a book so heavy and large that it could be used to commit bodily assault—includes substantial material from St Bride Library's collection. Bob said that he held down many pages when

Boecius de consolacione philosophie *by Boethius, printed by Caxton in 1478*

photos were taken of type specimens for the book. "They had to Photoshop our thumbs out," he says. (Easter egg: I found at least one of Bob's thumbs in the book.)

Bob Richardson holds the 1838 coronation issue of The Sun *printed with a gold hue used an ink that made the 40 printing employees of the paper quite ill.*

To view the various archives, Bob took me through winding passageways, through sets of doors, and up and down back (and front) stairs. Due to good timing, a break in a meeting in the Passmore Edwards Library allowed us to drop into the Blades Library, which is reached

through the other library, and requires passing through two locked doors, the keys to which Bob is one of only two people to possess.

None of the collection has been digitized. Copyright issues are more complicated in the UK than in the United States—even though our rights may seem byzantine enough—making works that date back to the late 1800s sometimes still covered by certain rights. The library's catalog, however, is online and searchable.

Clockwise from upper left: A piece of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, out of place from printing, but acquired at some point by Blades; a stereotype, left, and corresponding flong (paper mould), right, for newspaper rotary printing from the Financial Times*; a kind of bitmapped metal type of smaller and larger dots, set here by hand into a portrait of Gutenberg that was tipped into the 1878 specimen book,* Harpel's Typograph; or, Book of Specimens*; a detail from the second most-expensive edition of the Kelmscott Press's Chaucer.*

THE TYPE ARCHIVE

Why is an elephant part of The Type Archive's motif? Its buildings in Stockwell in Lambeth once housed baby elephants in their capacity as an animal hospital and quarantine, and served as temporary housing for circus animals during the off season. The place went through changes after that, but Sue Shaw liked the notion of pachyderms traipsing the grounds that she held on to the elephant for the logo.

The archive lists three major collections that it acquired and maintains, each of which is precious and could be the centerpiece of a working or research museum, and which represent the three major kinds of letterpress type. Collectively, the archive calls it the National Typefounding Collection, as it represents a significant portion of the United Kingdom's type heritage. (For a more complete history, including a family tree, visit The Type Archive's Collections page.)

Stephenson Blake, typefounders in Sheffield, effectively became the descendants of a large percentage of significant English printers and typefounders across five centuries via mergers, acquisition, and sheer endurance. The Type Archive acquired its fonts and library in 1996.

The Lanston Monotype Corporation, the creator of the hot-metal Monotype composition and casting systems, handled the U.S. and Canada, and licensed its technology to an English sister firm, which became a global powerhouse. The English Monotype Corporation, which persists in a somewhat different form through many intermediate steps as a digital type foundry today, once supplied much of the world's needs for type for book composition. (The remains of Lanston's intellectual property are currently owned by the P22 Type Foundry in New York.)

In 1992, The Type Archive purchased the production equipment, matrices, punches, and other remaining gear that Monotype still retained, as well as corporate records related to type manufacture. The Science Museum in London took over ownership, and The Type Archive maintains the collection.

The archive formed a new company called Monotype Hot-Metal Ltd to fill orders that still come in, and have never abated, for new matrices

for Monotype casters. Four men, one in his 70s and the other in their 80s, drive a 140-mile round-trip every Monday to work at The Type Archive, fire up the old equipment, and have a nice lunch catered by a firm next door. (I met two of the men, as I'll describe later.)

Finally, wood type gets its representation from Robert DeLittle Woodletter, acquired in 1996 from the grandson of the founder, Jim DeLittle, who had continued to make new type as a one-man operation until that time. The DeLittle collection largely comprises patterns, the source templates used by a wood-type worker to create the type used for printing.

(I recently visited the Hamilton Wood Type & Printing Museum in Two Rivers, Wisconsin, and the collection the museum received from the Hamilton company—founded around the same time as DeLittle in the late 1800s—is the same: mostly patterns. However, the museum also received an enormous initial gift of type and made subsequent acquisitions that led to a current collection of 1.5 million pieces of wood type. It's also acquired giant wood-block circus posters and other wood printing material.)

General manager Duncan Avery holds a specialized tool for cutting accented characters.

The Berthold Wolpe archives

The Type Archive also has the complete papers and some of the library of Berthold Wolpe due to the long association between Sue and Berthold, with whom she worked for years at Faber & Faber, and her connection with the family.

All of this material is historic, useful, and irreplaceable. Much of it could be put to use or replicated for demonstration and use in a working museum, like the Papiermühlemuseum (Paper Mill Museum) in Basel, Switzerland. And Sue would love that to be the case. She stands ready; a lack of funds is the only problem.

Without The Type Archive's preservation, and the dogged work by Sue and many other trustees and volunteers, it's possible its collections would have been thrown away, broken up, or lost in warehouses.

An exhibition case currently in storage

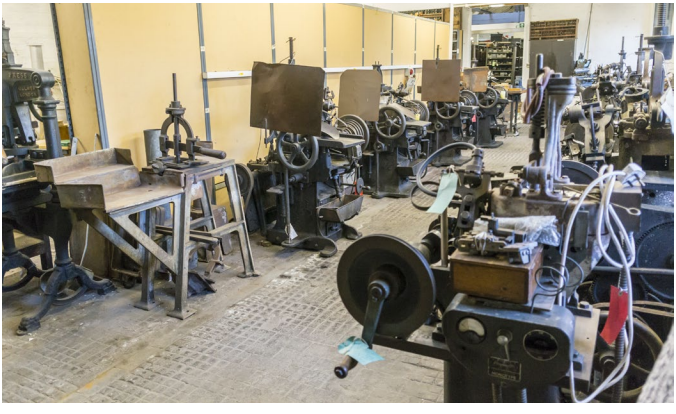
A tour of the vault and other rooms

With a bit of luck and timing, I met Sue at The Type Archive a few days before the Wolpe exhibition was slated to close, and she spent hours touring both me and type designer Toshi Omagari through the many buildings and rooms

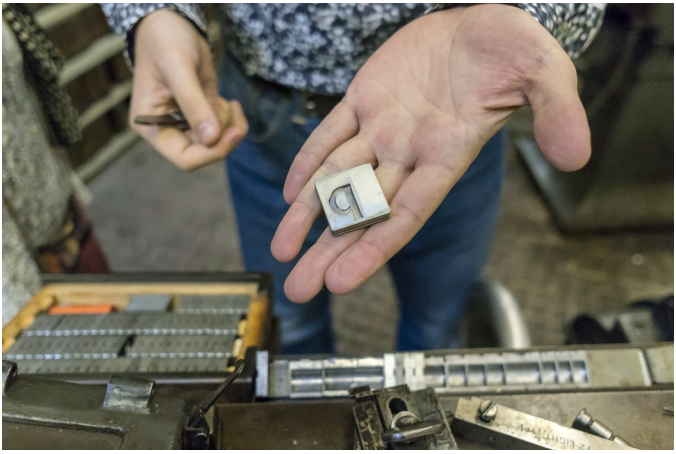
Freshly cast display-size Albertus

that form the archive's collections. Toshi had already spent large amounts of time at the archive researching Wolpe's type, going through Monotype records and materials, and helping with the exhibition, but Sue let us dig even further into the recesses.

Our tour gave me the feeling not just of looking in history, but being sent back in time. Seeing the preserved remains of an entire industry, often in the original cabinets and boxes they occupied when in active use, made it feel like living the history. While there were some glass-topped exhibition cases, most of what's in storage aren't untouchable artifacts, but rather the tools of publishing that could be readily picked up and put to use if the industry were magically resurrected.



Casters wait for a future home and getting back to work.



Clockwise from top: Toshi holding a matrix for casting Albertus; a wood-type carving display with a pantograph, templates, and finished wood type; original 1897 "A" Monotype keyboard for composing type; the Monotype leasing library of large-sized matrices for casting.

Sue Shaw in her element

That sense was aided by rooms set up for work, such as the general manager's office of Duncan Avery at one end of a building. Duncan is a former Monotype employee who began work near the end of World War II at the Salfords plant, making parts of weapons when he was still in his teens. He was formerly the manager of Monotype's Hot-Metal Division when the company closed it in the 1990s. In another area, an office connected with Stephenson Blake has been re-created intact from its original materials.

Again, through luck, Duncan and Parminder Kumar Rajput (known to everyone as Kumar) happened to be in on an off day—normally they're there only on Mondays—and I was able to see the type production operations in motion. Kumar is said to be the only person in the history of Monotype who mastered all the necessary machines.

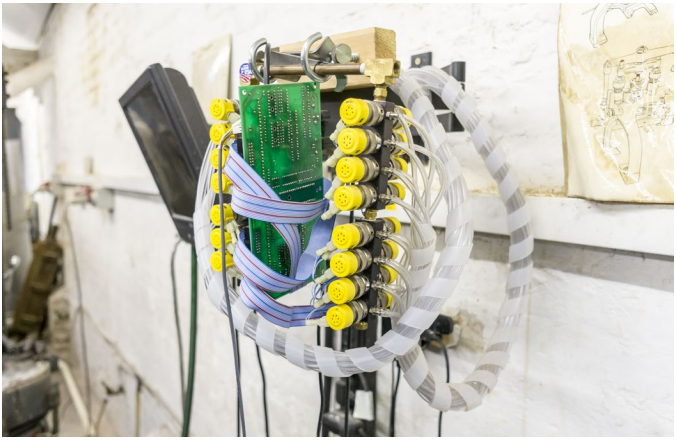
Duncan mentioned they had come in, because in creating matrices, a punch that had been used many times broke. Kumar casually fired up a different set of machines to cut a new punch, and then proceeded to make the matrices. The matrices produced are typically for use in India and Africa, where old Monotype equipment continues to serve an active purpose, although that continues to slowly ebb away.


SPECTRUM
The original Types
(Enschedé & Zonen)
used for Type Drawings

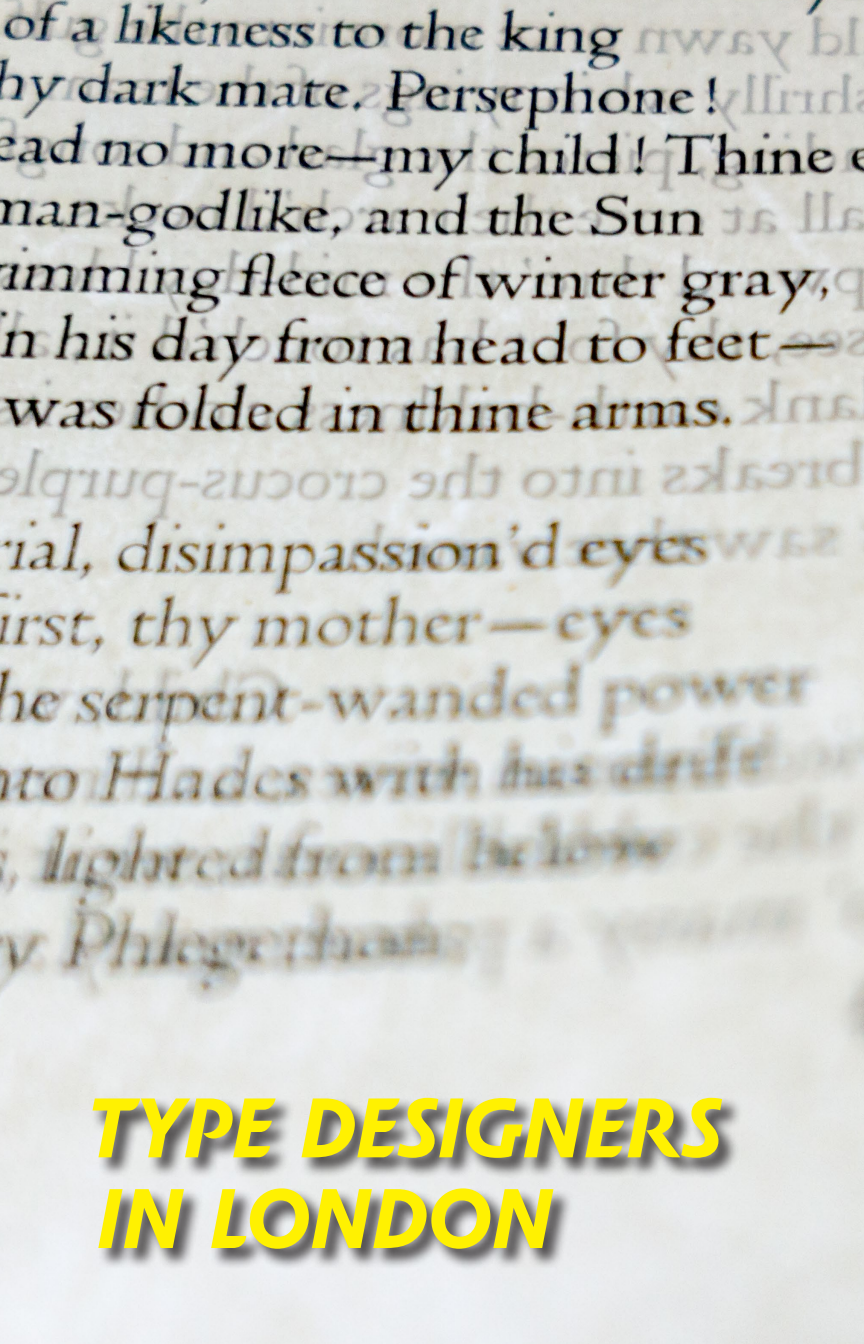

S7017
See S9945
Copyright for Guest, Keen & Nettlefold Ltd. F.J.5249
22-9-42
See S4614. Matches
S9444. S7942.
Pt SIZE 10
S7024 SIZE SHOWN 10 UNIT 6
S7025 SIZE SHOWN 10 UNIT 9
S7026 SIZE SHOWN 10 UNIT 9
S7027 SIZE SHOWN 36 36pt UNIT
S7028 SIZE SHOWN 12 UNIT 18
S7029 SIZE SHOWN 7¾ UNIT 10

Facing page, from top: Original type material from Enschedé; Monotype company records that tracked every unique character designed for each client; sand castings of larger type sizes; Toby, Toshi, Sue, and your author in The Type Archive offices.

This page, at right: A case for holding punches. Below, a Macintosh-driven Monotype casting system, designed by Bill Welliver, which simulates the paper-tape triggered pneumatic process.



A page with perfect showthrough from Seven Poems and Two Translations, *a 1902 edition of Alfred Tennyson by the Doves Press*


of a likeness to the king
hy dark mate. Persephone!
ead no more—my child! Thine
man-godlike, and the Sun
imming fleece of winter gray,
in his day from head to feet—
was folded in thine arms.
rial, disimpassion'd eyes
irst, thy mother—eyes
he serpent-wanded power
nto Hades with his drift
, lighted from below
y Phlegethon
TYPE DESIGNERS
IN LONDON

MANY, MANY TYPE DESIGNERS PRACTICE IN LONDON, and although I'd love to conduct dozens and dozens of interviews, my schedule didn't allow it this time around. On this trip, though, I met three designers who represent a good sense of the breadth of type design.

Robert Green's Doves Type is a remarkable effort that led to the recovery of metal type thought to be drowned in the Thames. Toshi Omagari of Monotype, who created the revivals of Wolpe's work, is a prolific designer at the current incarnation of a historic English type company. And Jeremy Tankard is also prolific: he's created dozens of typefaces over a couple of decades, and has produced some beautiful specimen books of his work.

But first, a short digression.

THE DOUBLE CROWN CLUB

My timing for this trip, which thus far had resulted in several unexpected surprises, turned out to be just off for a regular, but anticipated gathering. While in London, several printers and designers asked if I was able to stay for the Double Crown Club dinner. The event, happening the day after I left, gathers designers and typographers who have typically also written about typography and printing. (*Double crown* was one of several terms for particular sizes of uncut paper.)

The organization was founded in 1924 by Oliver Simon as a regular dining group ("not more than six times and not less than four times a year"). Speakers were, and remain, a regular feature, as well. Dinners happen now routinely at the Savile Club.

The club intended to publish books, which it did for a few years. Now its primary tradition is that a member rather beautifully designs the menu. For one dinner, illustrator Charles Mozley created a drawing of Wolpe, later included in the tribute book, *Wolperiana*. Wolpe was president of the club in 1964, and created the menu for dinner #231 on October 21, 1975, which used his Pegasus face. I believe I missed dinner #439.

I was unaware of the event, and will hope to arrange a future trip around one, and cadge an invitation as well.

Some of the recovered Doves Press type

ROBERT GREEN

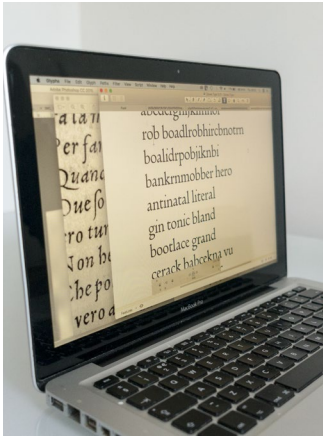
A graphic designer by trade, Robert Green routinely created type as was needed for projects or personal interest. But he developed an abiding love for a type, used briefly for some remarkable books, that had a simplicity and purity decades ahead of its time.

T.J. Cobden-Sanderson and Emery Walker co-founded the Doves Press in 1900 to design and print books that served two purposes: to uphold the craft lost in the rush to mechanization of type production and printing, and also to stand in contrast to the beautiful, but often overwrought, work of the Kelmscott Press and William Morris.

Cobden-Sanderson commissioned, and Walker supervised the production of, a type based on 15th Century masterworks that relied on the same sources that led to Morris's Golden type. However, the type for Doves hewed much more closely to the original. The press printed a small number of influential books, including a King James Bible, before financial and other disputes led to its dissolution.

At his home in Hackney, Robert showed me some of the press's work, which I'd never seen firsthand before. The type is outstanding,

as well as the printing, and the unpretentious form on the page represents an aesthetic of letting the type speak clearly for itself that was out of step with work of the day, but which foretold design aesthetics to come. Robert thinks that the theory behind the Doves Press foretold some of the ideas put forward by later typographic essayists, like Beatrice Warde of Monotype ("The Crystal Goblet (or Printing Should Be Invisible)") and Jan Tschichold.



Always at work perfecting the type

After the Doves Press fell apart, Cobden-Sanderson negotiated to keep the type and print with it until his death, at which point Walker would reclaim it. Unfortunately for aesthetic history, Cobden-Sanderson had other plans. In 1913, he dumped the punches and matrices from the Hammersmith Bridge into the Thames, and then in 1916 and 1917, over about 120 trips, dropped all the type that had been cast into the river as well. He revealed the act only when complete. He died in 1922, and there lay the type.

Robert attempted to recover this past digitally, and set out to re-create a version as best he could, working backwards from printed pages to try to tease out the original forms. He released his version in 2013 as The Doves Type.

But Robert is a clever man, and he sorted out where Cobden-Sanderson might have dropped the type from the bridge. On his own, he dug in the muck at low tide, and immediately found three pieces of the type. He then worked with the Port of London's salvage diving team, which recovered about 150 additional pieces—plus two pennies and a bullet. (A fuller account of the history of the type and its recovery can be found online, including videos.)

Robert showed me his cache of type and objects, and even let me pick up the type sorts, which was a remarkable experience. I've touched a lot of metal type in the last year, but there's an electricity in its recovery after a century under water. Robert believes no more is recoverable in practical terms, between the mud and tides and new concrete bridge foundations poured nearby decades ago that likely cover whatever might remain.

Still, with the actual type in hand, and more scanning and work, he revised his face and released an update. The type suffered from being submerged for a century, but it still gives up new details. He continues to refine his digital rendition, trying to move from approximating the type's beauty towards the platonic ideal of the face.

It's an impossible task, and he knows it, because the interaction of type and paper through relief printing creates enough variation that there is no perfect original: even with the actual type, each print pulled would be ever so slightly different, as can be seen in the books printed with the original type.

His whole journey started with a simple aim: "I just wanted to find a nice Roman type that hadn't made it to digital."

TOSHI OMAGARI

Toshi seems to have boundless energy, between his design work and travel. Born in Japan, he received a degree in visual communication design in Tokyo in 2008, and then a master's in typeface design at the renowned University of Reading program in England in 2011. He started as an intern at Monotype after graduating in 2011, and was hired in 2012. He's created his own faces, as well as updated, revived, and adapted faces at Monotype.

It may seem strange for a designer to devote as much time as he did to reviving the work of another. Type design, like many practical artistic professions, involves apprenticeship, during which one studies masters while one's own style emerges. Many people chafe at this sort of work, and take different paths, some of which are reactive to the past and others of which ignore it. Some are successful at that, some are not.

However, Wolpe is unique, and Toshi's revivals form a large body of work that certainly derives from Wolpe's intent, but also extends his idiom dramatically. The revival fonts have hundreds upon hundreds of glyphs that were never in the original, as well as entire new weights. Through his research, Toshi recovered the original intent of many of the faces, creating something close to what Wolpe drew and clearly wanted, compared to what was possible in the multi-step intermediation of moving from drawings to metal type that involved compromises with craftspeople and technology limitations.

JEREMY TANKARD

I came across Jeremy Tankard's name everywhere when I started researching type designers working in London. He attended Central St. Martins and The Royal College of Art, and one of his typefaces is named De Worde, in honor of Wynkyn and released in 2017 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Wynkyn de Worde Society. He lived in a houseboat named The Mayflower near Chiswick Mall, which let him routinely walk by houses once owned by Edward Johnston, Emery Walker and T.J. Cobden-Sanderson, and William Morris.

There's only one problem: he doesn't live in London anymore. Like so many working professionals who didn't snap up a house at the right time, he and his family have moved away, and now live in Cambridge. (Cambridge has a rich typographic tradition: Tankard notes Stanley Morison used the Cambridge University Press to test and prove the value of reviving classic faces at Monotype.) He makes regular trips to London, and my visit happened to coincide with one.

Perusing Jeremy's Web site, you could be confused if you thought he had a type foundry with a number of people producing faces under

Some of Jeremy's handsome specimen books and flyers

the Jeremy Tankard label. I confess, despite reading the site, I thought maybe he quietly had a team working for him. In fact, it's all him. He's designed typefaces since 1998, and has an extraordinary number of very fine text faces with extensive character sets. (This book is set in one of them: Enigma.) This isn't quite unique, but it's a very difficult task for a type designer without an office full of people, even given the 20-year time span.

Along with his faces, Jeremy has written essays and produced a large number of specimen books, which have the heft of a body of work that stands in addition to, instead of simply promoting, his type designs.

A drawer of 3D type at the New North Press


WOOD BORDERS
NIP STOCK BLOCK BOX
LETTERPRESS IN LONDON

Printing spread outward from Fleet Street, and printers remained in the city for centuries. Letterpress and other relief printing was largely replaced by offset lithography (pronounced with a long i as "lythe-o" in England), but the relentless development in London and increase in rents has seemingly pushed out nearly all commercial and hobby printers of all stripes who remain.

At the same time, it appears that digital natives crave a connection to "real" type, and want to get away from a screen, at least for a time, and get their hands dirty and work their muscles. As a result, colleges of all sizes and natures that ended printing programs and tossed, donated, or stored their letterpress equipment and type decades ago have built new studios. They've pulled items out of mothballs or acquired and refurbished presses and type. A clever few never shut them down at all.

For instance, as I mentioned earlier, the University of the Arts London's Central Saint Martins has a letterpress shop, and it's never halted. Helen Ingham runs it, and she helped create the printing studio at St Bride, started in 2010, resuming printing there after many decades.

The same has been true in other cities I've visited, particularly with institutions that may be able to squeeze letterpress into just enough space in existing, often older or less-used buildings and facilities. You only need enough room to crank the press and slide galleys around.

Most of the independent letterpress shops still extant in London are part-time or operating for somewhere just above the love of the craft—some commercial work produced, and some teaching of workshops, students, or apprentices. I detail three studios below.

Hand & Eye Letterpress

Coming from Seattle, I wasn't shocked that a large percentage of conversation in London was about real estate, housing prices, and the rapid change in the city. The shifts threaten to displace not just the poorest residents, who suffer the most, but also well-established middle-class earners and pensioners, due to rent hikes and building demolition.

I nearly missed meeting with one letterpress printer, Phil Abel, whose press was formerly Hand & Eye, because despite having the

Phil printing record album covers

address and plotting it on a map, I slipped one morning and typed his firm's name into a directions app instead of consulting my own notes. I wound up near King's Cross at a towering new office building and realized my mistake.

Phil had moved out of that location seven years prior. A quick Uber took me to Phil's *third* location, a few doors down and substantially smaller than the one he'd moved to from King's Cross, and which he shares with his business partner and another business upstairs. He has a few years left in the current cramped but functional spot, but the writing on the press may be the writing on the wall. (Social Enterprise Printing Ltd is the name of the merged operations of Phil's firm and his new colleague's printing and brokering business.)

Finished front and back

When I visited, he was working on a remarkably fun and attractive project. A company, The Electric Recording Company, is reissuing

limited, one-time pressings of classic vinyl records for collectors at a premium price—hundreds of pounds—and turned to him to print the album jackets. After testing, Phil opted to use offset to get the best halftone quality for images, and then print by his electric large-format Heidelberg letterpress using Monotype-cast type and line blocks for some of the recurring logos and other elements. The result is something more than a replica—it's a new original.

Phil maintains a large collection of type, some of it in an upstairs space, and a proofing press and other equipment. However, he had to get rid of his own Monotype typesetting system for reasons of space. It's now part of Effra Press, an operation run by a former employee (who trained at The Type Archive, too), who moved it all to North Yorkshire, where real-estate prices are a bit less dear.

NEW NORTH PRESS

I had heard of the New North Press long before visiting, because the studio—possibly uniquely in the world—had commissioned and manufactured both two-dimensional (2D) laser-cut and routed printing blocks (by Thomas Mayo) and designed and output 3D printed type.

Richard Ardagh at the New North Press

Unique digitally cut "2D" type

During research and reporting in 2017, I found many people experimenting with digitally driven analog output for letterpress. At least one wood type maker, Scott Moore of Moore Wood Type, produces 2D laser engraved and cut wood type alongside his traditional pantograph produced blocks. But the New North Press developed AHP Six, a system of modular, angular graphical units. Alongside that is a 3D face, A23D, they made as an experiment, and with which they continue to work.

However, New North Press is traditional at its heart, and has as much metal and wood as they can fit into a cramped space that nonetheless provides ample room for teaching and printing. Graham Bignell founded the press, and Richard Ardagh and Beatrice Bless later came along to learn and then became part of the studio. Graham co-owns the building in which it's located, which is full of artists and studios of all sorts, including Graham's own space adjacent to the press in which he restores works on paper.

The studio is in Hoxton, which is part of Shoreditch, and the larger area is known as the East End. Until recently, it was full of artists and craftspeople, many of them on the younger side. They showed me a book during my visit, *Makers of East London*, which included them. But they said sadly, even though the book came out in early 2017, many of the people featured have had to find other places to

3D printed type

work. As we spoke, a loud drilling shook the building due to construction next door; drilling was negotiated to occur only two hours in the morning each day, but it was rattling.

During my visit, they showed me the 3D-printed type, and Richard noted that while some of the thinner, fragile elements print well, the real problem is cleaning. Voids get filled, and without care, the strokes can be damaged. Because most letterpress relies on elements that have flat edges and right angles, the 2D hexagonal blocks cut by Mayo allow for the creation of interesting and unique shapes. But they also require extra work to get the spacing right and lock down.

The press offers classes to students and adults, and has a great strategy for shop improvements and pedagogy. In classes for the Chelsea College of Art, students make a design from a drawer of type using a good sampling of what's in the case. These prints are then assembled into specimen books for the press's type collection!

Richard notes that the press isn't a full-time operation. Classes and special events happen as they can, and he tries to grab as much time as he can out of the rest of his working schedule to print. Occasionally, larger commercial jobs come across that let them dig in. They recently created a set of about 40 signs for a theatre that wanted placards with a historical feel and would have a legitimate distressed quality from the type that was used without fakery.

THE COUNTER PRESS

London is a big city, and sometimes transport doesn't agree. That led me to miss a visit in person with the Counter Press, run by David Marshall and Elizabeth Ellis, who are digital graphic designers for most of their working hours. However, we caught up by video in January to talk about what led them to set up a shop.

They're also in the East End, and seeing the same turnover due to London's growth catching up. They have a compact space packed with presses and other kit, and spend as much time printing as they're able. Elizabeth studied at the Edinburgh College of Art, which had

a letterpress shop, while David hadn't had an opportunity at his school, and looked for the chance to learn. Both are several years out of school, and part of the new generation engaging deeply with letterpress that give old-timers hope that traditions get carried on.

When they can, they combine press work with digital design, often printing a single copy on letterpress, rather than in quantity, and then producing it using other printing methods.

A recent work by Counter Press

David says, "You can kind of romanticize or fetishize the past, and I hope that's not what we're doing." Elizabeth finds herself drawn to the type: "It feels like it has history. Who had them? What happened to them? Where had they been?" There's a "silent history within."

CODA

On the last night I was in London, staying with friends near the Greenwich Observatory, they invited over for dinner Alix Christie, a friend of theirs and the author of *Gutenberg's Apprentice*, a sort of fly-on-the-wall novel that re-created the atmosphere and tension of Gutenberg and his workshop printing their first books. It's told from the standpoint of Gutenberg's main assistant.

Alix brought a remarkable artifact with her to dinner. It was a book printed by her grandfather, who had been a printer all his life in San Francisco, ran a personal press of his own, and taught her to print. (Alix also has her own press.)

The book was the Gettysburg Address printed in 4-point type. She said her grandfather didn't believe in highfalutin' notions about fancy design. He liked good, solid, competent work and this itsy-bitsy book was his entry in that category. It was the perfect end to a perfect trip.

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This work relies on a combination of first-hand examination of objects, primary sources, and secondary accounts, such as contemporary reporting and correspondence, and modern reporting. Printed and online sources appear here; interviews and conversations that contributed to this book are credited in Acknowledgements.

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A call to action: Donate to the St Bride Library by becoming a friend at £5 a month (cancellable at any time). The Type Archive currently accepts donations by check via instructions on its site.

Great thanks as well for the time, kindness, and frequently tea or other libations offered by Phil Abel (Hand & Eye Press, now merged into Social Enterprise Printing Ltd), Richard Ardagh and Graham Bignell (New North Press), Robert Green (The Doves Type), Keith Houston (author of *Shady Characters* and *The Book*), David Marshall and Elizabeth Ellis (The Counter Press), Jeremy Tankard (Jeremy Tankard Typography), and Toby Wolpe.

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This book is only possible because of patrons who contributed when it was a fast-moving gleam in my eye, timed to get me to London before an exhibition concluded. I'd like to thank all the campaign backers for their support, and in particular folks who contributed at the "pond kicker" level to, er, kick me over the pond to England: Sam Roberts, Henry and Darcy Burner, Patrick Weyer, and Todd Rowell. And an extra special thanks to my long-ago colleague Elizabeth Stauderman, who helped me at the beginning of my career and now at what I would like to pretend is the middle.

Alistair Hall generously let me use some of his beautifully daylit photos of the Wolpe exhibition. Jeff Carlson provided his usual excellent editing skills and wit in taking me from draft form to a final version.

It was a pleasure to stay with my friends Tom and Kirstin and their kids for part of my London journey, and they took me into their family life: thank you so much. And my heartiest gratitude to my family, for sparing me for a week without them in London—I will repay that with a trip for all of us there soon—and my endless talk about hot-metal composition, the details of stereotype manufacture, and type design.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Glenn Fleishman considers himself a recovering typesetter, in that he was trained in the profession during the end of the phototypesetting era, as one of the last large wave of people to work solely in that capacity—and he still misses that work in some ways. He fell in love with type in his teenage years, and didn't originally understand how difficult it was to draw it. He soon did. He worked as a typesetter through his college years to help fund his degree in graphic design from Yale University from 1986 to 1990.

Glenn worked at the university's printing service after graduation, running its imagesetting department, working alongside presspeople, plate makers, and designers of all ages. He left Yale for the Kodak Center for Creative Imaging in Maine in 1991, where he ran the computing infrastructure and planned curriculum for artists and production people back at the start of proper digital training.

Glenn went on to work for a book packager, which produced computer books for Peachpit Press; to co-found Point of Presence Company, one of the first Web hosting and development firms (1993); to work at Amazon as employee #104 or so (1996–97); and ultimately shifting to freelance reporting and how-to book and article writing for publications that include the *Economist*, the *New York Times*, *Wired*, *Macworld*, *Fast Company*, *MIT Technology Review*, *Increment*, *American History*, Boing Boing, the *Atlantic*, and many others.

In 2017, he became the first designer in residence at Seattle's School of Visual Concepts, getting back up to speed in letterpress printing, and then designed and printed a book of his reporting on type, printing, and language. He spent the year writing about, researching, and talking about historical and contemporary printing and related fields, which culminated in visiting London and writing this book.

All of Glenn's work—electronic, print, and otherwise—can be found and much of it available for purchase via these pages:

https://glog.glennf.com/books-by-glenn

https://glog.glennf.com/the-store/

COLOPHON

This book's text and secondary heading are set in Enigma from Jeremy Tankard Typography. Enigma was chosen as a compact face that is highly legible at small sizes, as you can see in this book.

All the type on the cover, the book name on the title page, chapter initial cap, and the page folios are set in Monotype Albertus Nova. The remainder of the text on the title page, the chapter opening heading, and the main headings are set in Monotype Wolpe Tempest. Monotype Wolpe Fanfare and Fanfare Inline are used on the spine of the print edition. All these faces were revised and revived by Toshi Omagari from designs by Berthold Wolpe.

Portrait of Wolpe in the book's dedication by Omagari in the style of Charles Mozley. The Wolpe portrait appears as a glyph in all the Wolpe revival faces.

The ebook edition created in Seattle by the author. The print edition produced by Bookmobile in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on 70# matte Titan white.


33·6
29·2
LUDGA
27·9
Fleet
CIRCU
Urinal
ST. BRIDE'S AVENUE
32·3
P.H.
P.H.
P.H.
ST. BRIDE'S AVENUE
St. Bride's Church
(Vicarage)
B.M.
27·90
27·3
BRIDE LANE
BRIDE CT.
Site of St Bride's Well
Infant School
P.H.
BRIDE LANE
F.P.
B.P.
BELL'S BUILDINGS
F.P.
St. Bride Foundation Institute
Vicarage
Police Station (3rd. Division)
P. O.
DORSET BUILDINGS
F.P.
B.P.
DORSET CT.
B.P.
BRIDEWELL PLACE
F.P.
Bridewell Hospital (Offices &c.)

For over 500 years, the center of financial and judicial power in England has grown and remained in and near a square mile of buildings called the City of London. And at the heart of it is arguably the art of printing.

From a modest start in a small shop founded by Wynkyn de Worde near Fleet Street and Henry VIII's Bridewell Palace, printing's importance in the City grew ever larger. It cemented London as the center of empire during expansion, and the center of media and money in the modern era.

That history has been well preserved through two institutions, the St Bride Library and The Type Archive. But their future in the city remains uncertain. Faced with the constant pressure of urban growth, letterpress printers and type designers attempt to remain in a place that remembers its roots.

Join author Glenn Fleishman's jaunt around London, visiting collections and meeting printers, designers, archivists, historians, and contemporaries—and especially examining and discussing the work of type designer Berthold Wolpe (1905–1989), who helped shape the face of lettering in London—as he faces the uncertain future of London's legacy of printing in *London Kerning*.

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