

BULLETIN

of the

Association of British Theological

and Philosophical Libraries



Volume 28, Number 1-2
Spring/Summer 2021



BULLETIN 2021

The *Bulletin* is published by the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries as a forum for professional exchange and development in the fields of theological and philosophical librarianship. ABTAPL was founded in 1956 to bring together librarians working with or interested in theological and philosophical literature in Great Britain. It is a member of BETH (European Theological Libraries). The *Bulletin* is published three times a year (Spring, Summer and Autumn) and now has a circulation of approximately 200 copies, with about one third of that number going to libraries in Europe, North America, and the Commonwealth. The *Bulletin* is indexed in LISA (Library & Information Science Abstracts). ISSN 0305-781X

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The front cover shows a 1957 sketch by Evelyn Dunbar; see the article about her on p9f.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Apologies that we cannot be definite about future plans,
but we live in uncertain times!

4th NOVEMBER 2021 ABTAPL AUTUMN CONFERENCE

This will be held at the Lambeth Palace Library.
11:00 ABTAPL Committee meeting (Abbot Room)
13:00 Lunch (Bancroft Room)
14:00 AGM and Autumn Meeting,
followed by a talk and tour

18th NOVEMBER 2021 TRAINING DAY

Excel for Librarians, by Gillian Sheldrake

Further details will be announced nearer the time

2022 ABTAPL SPRING CONFERENCE & AGM

We are expecting the conference to be based at the Clayton Hotel in
Cardiff from 7-9 Apr 2022.

Once again, further details will be announced nearer the time.

Editorial

Many of the articles in previous Bulletins have come from talks given at the residential Spring Conference. Without such a conference again this year we have once more combined the Spring and Summer issues of the Bulletin. I hope there'll be an Autumn issue, but that depends on you!

Other than book reviews, and the chair's report, we have two main articles, which both show that theological libraries (quite rightly) are not just interested in theology.

In his essay 'Christianity and Culture' (in 'Christian Reflections' and elsewhere) C.S. Lewis raises and discusses the question, 'No-one, presumably, is really maintaining that a fine taste in the arts is a condition of salvation... What, then is the value of culture?... Has it any part to play in the life of the converted?' His conclusion – that it does have a value, and a role to play – is perhaps not unexpected.

He gives two reasons: first, that its values, although 'of the soul, not the spirit,' nevertheless 'contain some reflection or antepast of the spiritual values... though "like is not the same", it is better than unlike.' And, 'since we must rest and play, where can we do so better than here – in the suburbs of Jerusalem?'

Secondly, he writes, most of us 'glorify God by doing to his glory something which is not *per se* an act of glorifying but which becomes so by being offered. If, as I now hope, cultural activities are innocent and even useful, then they also... can be done to the Lord. The work of a charwoman and the work of a poet become spiritual in the same way and on the same condition.'

That reflection was stimulated by the first of the two articles I mentioned, which concerns the work of the artist Evelyn Dunbar, some of whose work is now held at the Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History.

The second article concerns the Parliament of Northern Ireland, which first met in 1921 in the buildings of what is now the Union Theological College. Joy Conkey describes how the centenary anniversary of this event was commemorated by the College by using Microsoft Sway.

The book reviews concern a variety of topics: fonts, planning library orientations, and the history of alphabetical order.

I hope that the variety of topics covered in this issue will stimulate others of you to write an article about your own library, or perhaps a review of a book you have read recently (preferably something to do with books or libraries!) I will need submissions by late November.

Richard Johnson
(editor)

CHAIR'S REPORT

Our 2021 ABTAPL Spring Conference was one-day only and online. We are very much looking forward to resuming our residential in-person conferences next year – save the dates for our stay at the Clayton Hotel in Cardiff from April 7-9. There will be optional library visits, a full day of training based at St Padarn's College, and more input and ABTAPL business, as well as lots of opportunity to mingle and network. Some of our greatest help comes from informal chat between ourselves.

This year the Spring Conference happened via Zoom. We had three training sessions, the ABTAPL Spring Meeting, an Open Forum and our lunchtime informal chat now christened ABCHATL. The first session by Jo Boardman, *Culture Shock – Managing Your Risk in Challenging Times*, was very helpful in preparing us for opening up post-pandemic. Emma Sullivan, Staff Development Librarian at the Bodleian presented on *Research Skills for the Digital Shift*, emphasizing the importance of up-skilling in tech and not being afraid to fail. We actively explored whether ABTAPL could make use of some of the recommended tools. The session on wellbeing by Ishbel Straker finished a full day with input on how to help ourselves with our work/life balance from a clinical professional.

The feedback was mostly positive. Should we have further conferences or training online we will take note of the need for shorter sessions, lots of interaction and longer breaks.

NEW! ABTAPL BENEVOLENT FUND

At our Spring Meeting at the Spring Conference we announced our new Benevolent Fund. This is in addition to our small grants bursary scheme which makes funds available for

training/attendance purposes. The Benevolent Fund is for any member to apply for up to £250 a year for personal expenses; these could be hardship due to a broken washing machine, unexpected financial demands, the need but lack of funds for a break away, to pay for counselling etc. Each application made to the Treasurer will be anonymised and assessed by a sub-committee keeping strict confidentiality. We very much hope members will make use of this scheme. We have also contributed £500 to CILIP's Benevolent Fund.

ABTAPL MATCHING SCHEME

We have started an informal matching scheme pairing a retired/experienced member with one who is new/new to the sector. We have eight pairs who will decide how often to be in touch; the parameters of the conversation; whether the 'new' member can return the favour and instruct the more mature member in social media etc. We will review this scheme after it has been running for a few months.

ABCHATL

Our monthly informal Zoom lunch chats are now called ABCHATL – a fabulous name decided by a competition with a prize! The chats happen on the last Thursday of the month. Interested members should contact the Deputy Chair for the Zoom link. Regulars are sent the link automatically. We anticipate continuing with these – which started during the Pandemic lockdown – once libraries are open again as it is a useful and enjoyable way to mingle with colleagues across the miles.

WEBSITE

We are intending to update the ABTAPL website and make it more attractive visually. We have surveyed members to establish their demands from the website. We will need members to join a user group once the new site is up and running, so please let us know if you are interested.

LOGO COMPETITION

Also, we have another competition – to decide a new logo for ABTAPL as part of the new website. We are inviting members to send in ideas/designs/inspiration for a new logo and updated lettering or no logo but updated lettering. The best will win a prize and be developed by a professional designer. We would like to keep the strapline of ‘Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries’ with the new lettering design. Think out of the box! Let your imagination go wild! All ideas, colours, designs, suggestions welcome. The prize for the entry which will go forward for professional development is a £50 voucher of your choice. Please send your entries to the ABTAPL Chair by 30th September; thank you!

Sally Gibbs
ABTAPL Chair

**[Book Review] ‘Planning Academic Library Orientations:
case studies from around the world’ by Kylie Bailin
(Chandos Publishing, 2018; ISBN 978-0081021712)**

This book is part of the *Chandos Information Professional Series*, which aims to “provide easy-to read and (most importantly) practical coverage of topics”.

The book is about planning library orientations; of special interest is chapter 23, which concerns making videos to assist distance learners. Despite the specific context the ideas are transferable to any project one might be thinking of. I would advise reading the chapter before the planned ABTAPL training in the summer.

The work role of Leah Townsend, the author of this chapter, revolves around interactive instruction, teaching information skills, subject liaison and supporting distance learners. This enables her to relate well to many of our situations, despite being based in Edmondton, Alberta.

Do the other chapters meet that standard? Overall, yes, with most offering an introduction and background to the problem they wanted to solve before moving on to what they did. They also generally cover evaluation with lessons learnt.

Other features of the eBook are indexes, both thematic and subject, references, full key word searchability, note making, and access to a dictionary.

There are topics which may be way beyond some of us but it’s worth looking at and can be accessed via the ABTAPL collection. (Contact Hannie Riley if you have not already registered for this.)

Finally, I know we are all busy but it’s good to back up our working practice with theory and evidence. We should not neglect our own professional reading!

Winette Field
Librarian, William Booth College

Evelyn Dunbar

Evelyn Dunbar (1906-1960) has been a relatively little known artist. If she is known, it is usually that she was the only 'salaried' female artist (on a rolling contract) by the far-sighted Kenneth Clarke's 'War Artists Advisory Committee', which aimed mainly to record wartime scenes for posterity, although there was also some use for propaganda purposes. Other women artists (Laura Knight, for instance) had work accepted by the committee, but that was on an ad-hoc basis. Evelyn Dunbar's particular contribution was to depict the role of women, on farms, in nursing, other occupations or keeping the home fires burning.



But more than anything, her focus was women working on the land, as so much of her work concentrated on gardens and farms, plants and landscapes. Additionally, she was not a modern artist: her style is not abstracted but is detailed and precise. So although her work hangs in major galleries, including the Tate and the Imperial War Museum, she has not received that much attention.

This has changed in recent years, when the contents of her studio surfaced after being in storage for half a century, following her early death in 1960. When her husband married again, her studio was dismantled and everything put away in the hotel her brother owned.



Later it was moved to his daughter's home where it was stored in an attic. It was only after her niece saw an item about her on the Antiques Roadshow that she contacted an art gallery. Over a thousand items: sketches, studies and some complete works, emerged and were later offered for sale through the London dealers, Liss Llewellyn. Some were exhibited at Pallant House Gallery, Chichester,

Although born in Reading in 1906, Evelyn Dunbar mostly grew up in Rochester where her family moved when she was aged 7. Her father, who was Scottish, had a successful draper's business on the High Street. They lived in Strood (across the river Medway), not so far from Charles Dickens's home at Gads Hill. Her mother, from Yorkshire, was a keen gardener but also a committed Christian Scientist. Both factors were to be influential in her artist daughter's life. Evelyn attended Rochester School for Girls, and then both Rochester and Chelsea Schools of Art, before further studies at the Royal College of Art. She soon picked up commissions: much of her early work saw her creating the illustrations for books such as *Gardeners' Choice* (Routledge, 1937), co-written and illustrated with Cyril Mahoney, Country Life Magazine's *Gardener's Diary* (1938). She also painted panels of the 'Brockley Murals' (at Brockley County Secondary School, now Prendergast School, Brockley). A series of five panels and the ceiling (which, remarkably, have survived bombing, redevelopments and redecoration), the panel created by Dunbar depicts *The Country Girl and the Pail of Milk*.

During World War 2 the Womens' Land Army training centre was based at Sparsholt, Hampshire. During one visit there, in June 1940, Evelyn met an unassuming and quiet young R.A.F. officer there, who had been on the staff as an agricultural economist, Roger Folley. They were temperamentally very similar and were married in 1942.



The end of the war marked a big change in Evelyn's life. Her mother and sister had died and the family home in Strood had been sold. In 1946 Roger, then demobbed, took up a post at the Oxford University Agricultural Research Station and they moved to live in south Warwickshire, then Enstone, nearer Oxford. This was possibly the most productive time, artistically, of Evelyn's career. The bumper apple crop of 1946 produced a series of related pictures. She also worked part-time for, first, the Oxford School of Art (a main predecessor institution for Oxford Brookes University), and the Ruskin School of Art of the University of Oxford.

In 1950, Roger was appointed to Wye College, near Ashford in Kent: a career move too good to miss. However, for Evelyn this meant an end to the teaching and engagement with the artistic life of Oxford, and to the productivity which had gone with those years. Her artistic output lessened, and she became increasingly absorbed with Christian Science. Whether this played a part in her next project is not known: it was through the artist Percy Horton, who was Master of Drawing at the Ruskin School of Art in Oxford, that she was introduced to the Bletchley Park teacher training college. This was the last of the 'emergency training colleges' established towards the end of the war to meet an urgent need for more teachers. Bletchley Park, now famous for its code-breaking, was in 1947 a deserted sprawl of wartime buildings and huts. The college's dynamic Principal, Miss Dora Cohen, had Christian Scientist parents: the two got along well. In 1957 Evelyn was commissioned to paint a mural across the back wall of the college's new hall – formerly the wartime teleprinter building (and now a main exhibition space for the museum).

She made several studies for the mural (see front cover) and spent much of the summer there, preparing the wall for

painting. The mural had to be finished for the official opening of the hall by Princess Alexandra that November. However the mural was never painted because of several factors for Evelyn including the distance from Kent and other commitments. One factor was her health. She had hardening of the arteries, but her Christian Science beliefs militated against her getting medical help. However, she did paint two large panels for the library, 'Alpha' and 'Omega', symbolising the college's motto 'In my end is my beginning'.

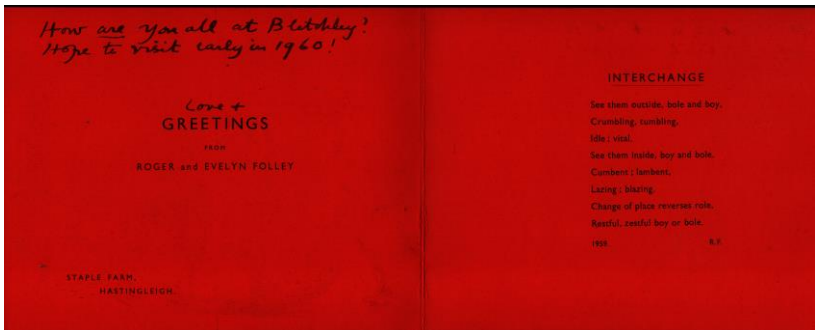


She became less active, and one spring evening in May 1960, out for a walk with Roger, she collapsed and died. Roger later remarried and it was then that the contents of Evelyn's studio were put into store in her brother's hotel 'Mullion Court', near Maidstone. Some 20 sketchbooks were, for some reason, stored separately and only emerged in late 2020, nearly 60 years later.

Evelyn's 'Alpha' and 'Omega' panels, as well as the sketches for the projected mural remained at the college following its move to Wheatley, near Oxford, in the 1960s, and its eventual absorption into Oxford Polytechnic, becoming Oxford Brookes University in 1992. When her studio contents came to light around 2015, the university was able to buy the double-sided sketches for the panels.

Latterly the university was also offered the sketchbooks, which include material from her schooldays right through into the 1950s, and some of her wartime work: a rich source for studies. However, these were in parlous condition having suffered considerably from damp. Preventative conservation work is being undertaken, meaning that they will shortly be available for research and digitisation.

With the exception of the 'Alpha' and 'Omega' panels, the works are no longer sited at the former college at Wheatley, but at Oxford Brookes' Harcourt Hill campus, on the western edge of Oxford. If this seems anomalous, in 2000 the Methodist teacher training institution, Westminster College, merged with Oxford Brookes University, and its School of Education, as it had then become, was relocated. The framed sketches were moved, along with other material relating to the college's history including some of Evelyn and Roger's much-admired Christmas cards.



Thus the artwork of a Christian Scientist is currently held among predominantly Methodist collections.

Coincidentally, Roger Folley's family had been Methodists and his father trained as a teacher at the college, then situated in London in 1893/4). Further; in the 1950s, as teaching was moving towards being a graduate profession, Westminster and Bletchley Park colleges were grouped with others in the 'Oxford Institute of Education' linked to Oxford University's Department of Education.

The 'Alpha' and 'Omega' panels and the sketches for the unpainted mural, are available on ArtUK. The sketchbooks will be digitised and made available online, as well as to researchers. What the sketchbooks show, which is amply demonstrated through her work, is her consummate drawing skills. As a schoolgirl her drawings were crisp, concise and lifelike: forty years later they had matured, were more confident, but essentially were still as careful and precise. Her drawing underpinned all her work.



While some of her work, especially earlier, is straightforwardly representational – the Brockley murals, for instance, other paintings are more complex, although usually deceptively open. 'A Land Girl and the Bail Bull' (1944-5, Tate Gallery London N05688) is a case in point. Ostensibly a bucolic scene of early morning on the Hampshire downs (the sketches were made at about 5.00am), it holds a range of compositional and symbolic meaning. As with many great pictures, it works well because of its geometry, especially the 'golden ratio' of the land girl and the bull in the foreground.

The scene is precisely and equally split, vertically as well as horizontally, by the 'bail', the mobile milking shed. In the eastern sky the dawn breaks: this painting was three years from first idea to completion, years of war, but by 1944 peace was in view. But the eye is held by the tension between the vulnerable land-girl, and a feared masculine bull, symbolic of the role women had played in the war, and maybe of the coming changing place of women in society.

Her last finished work, again long in gestation but only completed and signed days before her death, was 'Autumn and the Poet' (1960, Maidstone Museum). The scene is metaphorical, perhaps mystical. Like 'A Land Girl and the Bail Bull', Evelyn probably drew on Greek myth for inspiration. The rural landscape is out of perspective and heavily stylised; the figure of the 'poet' (evidently Roger) is confronted by a robed being with a cornucopia of autumn fruit. It is as if the poet has awoken into a dream world. The work is given extra significance as it might presage Evelyn's own demise and passing into another existence. While she knew of the threat to her life of her condition, and was probably conscious that time was running out, whether this painting was a deliberate mystical finale is unknown.

Christian Science, founded by the American Mary Baker Eddy towards the end of the nineteenth century, essentially believes in the goodness of God, whose will is to bring spiritual and physical health and healing. Its buildings are noted as visually and functionally embodying the unity and coherence of the movement's beliefs. Evelyn Dunbar's art, while not proselytising, sought to express this visually – and most typically of people set in scenes of plants and trees and land.

Bibliography - Christopher Campbell-Howes, *Evelyn Dunbar, A Life in Painting* [Romarin, 2016]

Illustrations (all by Evelyn Dunbar):

- p9 wartime sketches*
- p10 sketch of Mullion Court hotel*
- p11 sketch of Roger Folley*
- p13 Alpha/Omega panels
- p15 Christmas card
- p16 drawing* 'Off to School' (drawn when aged 15)

* From sketchbooks

(see Google Images for other paintings referred to)

Peter Forsaith/Tom Dobson
Oxford, June 2021

Centenary celebrated through Microsoft Sway

The Parliament of Northern Ireland met in Union Theological College, Assembly's College as it was then, between 1921 and 1932, prior to the construction of Stormont, the present home of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Commons met in the Library, while the Senate met in the Chapel. Since this was such a significant anniversary in the life of the College, I really wanted to ensure that the Library played its part in the centenary celebrations. However, since 11 January 2021 the Library has been closed to the public due to issues with the ceiling in the main reading room. A sizable piece of plasterwork had fallen off the ceiling in October 2020 and investigations had to be carried out to establish the cause of this and the significant cracking in the dome. I usually create exhibitions for the glass cabinets which sit in the centre of the main reading room, but given these circumstances this was simply not possible. A colleague in another Library suggested I investigate Microsoft Sway and think about creating an online exhibition. After watching several YouTube videos explaining how to use Sway and having a go at creating a few Sways, I was more informed and decided it would be worth trying to create a Sway on the Parliament of Northern Ireland and the College.



The commemorative plaque which hangs over the main entrance of the College.

Microsoft Sway is a free presentation program which allows users who have a Microsoft account to combine text and a variety of media, for example, photographs, audio and videos, in creative and visually appealing ways. Users can pull content in from the device they are using as well as from the internet, including YouTube, OneDrive and social media sites such as Twitter. It is possible to share links to Sways with others, and to embed Sways in webpages.

Having done some background reading on the political situation in Ireland a centenary ago, I set about investigating the materials in our archive and other secondary literature, specifically about the College and its interactions with the fledgling Parliament. It was a challenge to get access to other sources outside of the College since the public Libraries and most public buildings were closed in early 2021 due to Covid-19. Thankfully I had started research in 2019 and had some information gathered already. Librarians in Belfast's Newspaper Library were extremely helpful sending me pictures of relevant newspapers. Thankfully I had visited the Newspaper Library pre-Covid and had identified key newspaper articles. I wrote the exhibition in a Word document and put this into Sway when it was completed. Pictures were taken and selected to go with the text. Arranging the text and pictures in Sway took some time but it was fairly easy to change the layout and adjust the background styles so it looked attractive and had visual impact.

Once completed the exhibition was read and approved by the Principal and Management Committee. The link to the exhibition was then put on our College blog and pushed out on our social media channels.



Between 1921 and 1932 Assembly's College, which is now Union Theological College, was the location of the Northern Ireland Parliament. This will seek to tell the story of that period in the College's history.

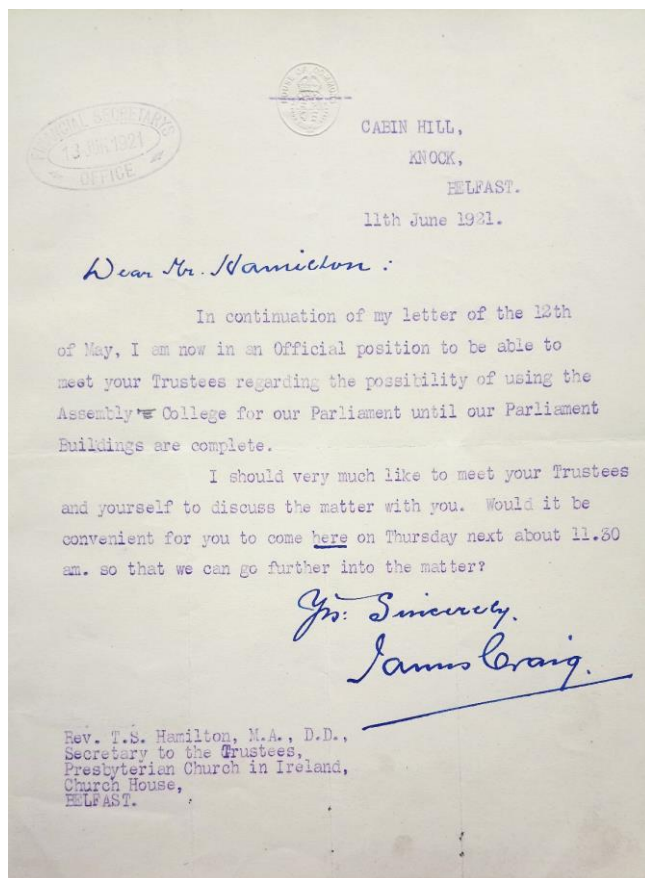


The Sway about the Parliament of Northern Ireland and the College.

The Principal suggested I contact the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Press Officer and inform him that the exhibition was live. The Press Officer was later contacted by the BBC News NI reporter Mark Simpson who wanted to do a story on the first Parliament of Northern Ireland to mark its establishment in June 1921. The Press Officer told him about the exhibition and Mark Simpson was keen to use pictures from it in a TV piece and on his Twitter feed. Union Theological College was acknowledged as the source of the pictures. Several newspaper articles about the online exhibition also appeared in the *News Letter* and *Irish News*. At the time of writing the exhibition has had 1,470 views. It can be seen here: <https://www.union.ac.uk/discover/news-events/blog/97/the-parliament-of-northern-ireland> I prepared a video which is a basic introduction to Sway for an ABTAPL training event which was held on 3 June. The video can be viewed here: <https://screencast-o-matic.com/watch/crhTq8Vhht0>

The exhibition has had a much wider readership than it would have had, if it had been limited to the glass cabinets in the Gamble Library at Union Theological College. Therefore, I

would encourage others to go to www.microsoft.com and start investigating Sway for themselves.



Letter from Sir James Craig to the Secretary of the Assembly's College Trustees regarding the use of the College by the first Parliament of Northern Ireland.

Joy Conkey
Librarian, Gamble Library,
Union Theological College

**[Book Review] *Just My Type: A Book about Fonts*
by Simon Garfield (Profile Books, 2011)
[ISBN 978-1846683022]**

My research into Lucy, Lady Howard de Walden, who had the mansion built which is on the campus of Regents Theological College (the library is located in what were her stables) has involved much use of the British Newspaper Archive. Because she was a daughter of a duke, and a baroness by marriage, the British press recorded her every movement. This not only greatly aids the telling of her story, but has also engendered in me a fascination with printing. There was a proliferation of national and local newspapers in Victorian Britain, and each needed reporters, editors, compositors and printers, and vast printing presses to produce daily, sometimes twice daily editions. This, in turn, has sparked my interest in the printing process, and the development of type or fonts.

According to the blurb:

Just My Type is a book of stories. About how Helvetica and Comic Sans took over the world.... About the great originators of type, from Baskerville to Zapf.... About the pivotal moment when fonts left the world of Letraset and were loaded onto computers and typefaces became something we all have an opinion about. And beyond all this, *Just My Type* reveals what may be the very best and worst fonts in the world – and what your choice of font says about you.

Garfield writes in an entertaining but highly informative manner. The history of fonts or typefaces of course closely matches the history of printing, which is always fascinating to rehearse. What is surprising, certainly to me, is the nuanced

emotional impact of the differing visual representation of letters and numbers. Although I consider myself a ‘detail person’ the close examination of the differences between Helvetica and Universa are on a different level, but once noticed are clear.

Producing a font – a family of type – is more than just designing 26 letters of the alphabet and the digits 0-9: there needs to be a set of lower case and upper case letters, the same again in *italic*, the same again in **bold** and different weights; then there are the non-alphanumeric symbols – punctuation, accents and ligatures (letters joined together – I love the technical terms: @ is amphora from Venetian history, the backward facing P to denote a paragraph break is a pilcrow). Designers can go to town on the ampersand & - this is the combination of the letters e and t for the Latin et and the term ampersand is a conflation of ‘et, per se and.’ Physical type for newsprint also required different sizes for titles and subtitles. So, each font could require hundreds of individual type pieces, and then multiples of each, the greatest requirement always being for the letter e, and the least for j and z.

Part of the fascination is discovering why particular fonts are so-named, and meeting the characters behind their design. The first type used by Gutenberg closely mimicked the handwritten script it was replacing; Venice became a centre for printing and the trade of matrices, moulds and type - and within twenty years of Gutenberg’s invention there were more than fifty printers in Venice, rising to 150 within the next twenty-five years. In more recent times fonts have become an integral part of branding. There was uproar when IKEA changed font! Research decided which font can be read most easily at speed on motorways.

This book opens our eyes to the quality of signage and lettering all around us. I have found myself silently commending and criticising shop fronts, street furniture, posters, web pages, and the fonts chosen by book publishers. Interestingly, another book I read recently on printing had been especially printed in the favourite font of the authors, but to my eyes the typeface was too light and did not scan well making the reading process harder work. This was an irritant to both my eyes and my mood!

Changing font is a two-click process these days. It has become so easy it is difficult to imagine the work that went in to cutting each letter shape in metal or wood, and the design process behind each chisel stroke. The most recent fonts have been created digitally, but there is still an undergirding philosophy directing the shape of the lower bowl of the g or the kick of the capital R. Some fonts are friendly, some utilitarian, some nostalgic with or without embellishment – with or sans serif.

If you have the least fascination with fonts, you will enjoy this book. I romped through it, astonished by the development and marvelling at the multitude of fonts. Book publishers would often disclose the font used on the copyright page, a tradition well worth reinstating. Maybe we should start a font disclosure movement!

Sally Gibbs
ABTAPL Chair

**[Book Review] *A Place for Everything: The Curious History of Alphabetical Order* by Judith Flanders (Picador, 2020)
[ISBN 978-1509881567]**

The publisher's blurb describes it as

A celebration of alphabetical order, from its beginnings to its eventual pre-eminence as the organizing principle for the word's knowledge.... To many of our forebears, the idea of organizing things by the random chance of the alphabet rather than by established systems of hierarchy or typology lay somewhere between unthinkable and disrespectful. *A Place for Everything* fascinatingly lays out the gradual triumph of alphabetical order, from its possible earliest days as a sorting tool in the Great Library of Alexandria in the third century BCE, to its current decline in prominence in our digital age of Wikipedia and Google.'

Use of the alphabet is ubiquitous for librarians, but we have been subject to its influence throughout our school days from the daily classroom register to the marks granted for school work, and sometimes for university work as well. The alphabet is something we take for granted in many areas of life, yet how long has this been the case? Not as long as might be imagined. What seems obvious for us was not the case for our ancestors. And, of course, this only applies to the western world which uses Roman script. Chinese, Japanese, Egyptian and other such scripts employ alternative organisational methods.

When some were beginning to think that ordering knowledge according to the alphabet might prove useful, they were up against the heritage of hierarchical ordering according to church history – early libraries were organised according to the hierarchy of the Bible, then the Church Fathers, theology more

generally, homilies or sermons, the lives of the saints, and right at the end or the bottom of the list – secular authors. Other organisation was based on classical education's *trivium* and *quadrivium*; the *trivium* or threefold path taught the basics: grammar, rhetoric and logic; the *quadrivium* or fourfold way covered mathematics, geometry, music and astronomy.

The need for order became obvious when the great thinkers of the Renaissance were filling many 'commonplace books' – basically scrapbooks where they jotted down quotes, poems, proverbs, prayers, passages of text – and needed a method of finding particular entries. *A Place for Everything* covers the development of stationery and furniture to accommodate the amassing of knowledge and documentation in business and private life in an attempt to impose order. In the library world this eventually culminated in the card index, but originally these were only intended for the use of librarians, not library users.

Flanders covers how early alphabetization only concerned the first letter, so everything beginning with A was shelved together but in no particular order. Later second or third letters of the title or author were taken into account but full alphabetization of the whole word was not considered necessary until much later.

Some libraries eschewed classification in preference to complete alphabetization of the whole stock. Most are now split into subject areas or *topoi* (topics), then alphabetized. The limitations and western Christian bias of Dewey's system are discussed as well as the way it is influenced by historical hierarchical thinking.

This book will appeal to those interested in history, librarianship, and the development of the organisation of

knowledge. I found it fascinating although I didn't read it straight through, I interspersed the chapters with some novels (a couple of Ian Rankin's Rebus novels, and a new (to me) writer Elly Griffiths whose protagonist is 'the irresistible heroine' of 'a captivating new archaeological crime series' (new in 2009). Interestingly, the fictional Ruth Galloway – whose specialism is ancient bones – also enjoys Inspector Rebus's cases). This isn't because the read was hard-going at all – I often like to intermingle my non-fiction reading with novels, and I can have several non-fiction books on the go simultaneously.

Flanders' research is extensive, as is the bibliography which I read with great interest. So many books... so little time!

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